ROLE OF REVOLUTIONARIES IN THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

A Critical History of the
Indian Revolutionary Movements : 1918-1934.

I. MALLIKARJUNA SHARMA.

MARXIST STUDY FORUM
HYDERABAD.

Dedicated to the inerasible memory of those innumerable martyrs who fought for an independent, sovereign, secular, socialist Republic of India.

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FOREWORD

History we need to acquaint ourselves with the happenings of the past generations. History we read to draw the requisite lessons from the deeds and misdeeds of our forefathers. It is idle to think that any human being can rebuild society in a vacuum or on a clean slate. The people of any country do inherit the customs, traditions and culture of their forbears. Suffice it is for the present to note the significance and importance of preserving the history of civilization and culture of any nation or region. Usually it is not possible for a single person however talented and truthful he may be to present an in-depth study of the history of all ages and periods. That is how we come across many endeavours of historians dealing with stages of the onward march of peoples and nations.

History is not just a chronicle of events. No doubt the events have to be noted and investigated. It need not be reiterated again and again that history is also necessarily interpretative. For otherwise it presents a confusing picture without any thread of thought or process running through and through in the simple sequence of incidents Historians there are whose ambition is to fix the record in the strait-jacket of pre-conceived thought pattern. But fortunately there are others who strive to infer or deduce a principle or pattern from out of the maze of events. One feels glad to find out that Mr. I. Mallikarjuna Sharma belongs to this category.

Again it is pertinent to point out that there are two schools of thought – one subscribing to indeterminism and the other to determinism. The first one does not choose to nor does it perceive any determining factor in history. On the other hand the second one observes the presence of a factor determining the course of history. For some it may be political in nature ; for some others it may be economic in texture. Yet in the case of others it may be perceived to be ideational and even 'Spiritual'. Be that as it may, there are determinists

with a difference They do subscribe to the existence of a determining thread running through life but yet they are neither self-conceited nor self-blinded to ignore the presence and role of accidents in history. In this respect Mr Sharma's reading of history is truthful in content and incisive in interpretation. He says approvingly, "It is said that accidents give crucial turns to the history of mankind and this proposition was vindicated by this pleasant 'accident' saving the lives of the two revolutionaries who were destined to play so crucial a role in the revolutionary movement of Bengal in the 1930's." (p. 174). Elsewhere while detailing the incidents of Chittagong uprising he observes, "At this time occurred an accident – though quite natural and possible in such circumstances it was quite a fateful accident so far as the future of the revolutionaries was concerned. Perhaps were it not for this accident, the history of the Chittagong Uprising would have shaped itself in an entirely different way" (pp. 272–273).

The author has chosen to deal with the history of Indian Revolutionaries upto the year 1934. Perhaps his subjective predilections might have contributed to that sort of selection for he himself took no mean part, in his own way, in struggles of a similar nature.

At first the writer made serious efforts to grapple with the definitions of the words 'revolution' and 'revolutionary'. For him 'revolutions are radical social changes in the form of sudden discharges and accelerated processes, caused by various factors among which the economic ones are of ultimate impotance. These changes are almost invariably accompanied by the use of force. generally as a matter of last resort.' (p. 3). Evidently his Marxist leanings impel him to take to this definition. Of course he is cautious enough to say 'these changes are *almost* invariably accompanied by the use of force." (emphasis mine). Obviously he is conscious of Marx's hope that in a country like England revolution might be brought about through peaceful means. He also defines a revolutionary as a person who strives to bring out a revolution. Nobody need quarrel with this statment. Armed with these concepts he proceeds with his dissertation.

Having come to the conclusion that the British rulers of India had to quit India mainly due to external causes and opining that internal causes only hastened their exit (p. 4), Mr. Sharma thinks that there are three main currents of struggles for Indian Independence viz. the national revolutionary, Gandhian and Communist (p. 6). He chose the history of national revolutionary struggles as the main branch of his bold inquiry.

The writer is straight forward and forthright in his discussion of the ways of violence and non-violence Though he has given the Mahatma his due for awakening and assessing the pulse of the Indian people, he finds fault with Mahatma's 'fads and idiosyncracies'. As his main theme is the history of revolutionaries he devotes a major portion of his book for description and elucidation of the deeds of the revolutionaries

Mr. Sharma's admiration towards the revolutionaries for their spirit of self-sacrifice and abundant devotion to the cause of the motherland, is infectious. One is bound to be fired with the spirit of heroism exhibited by these great sons and daughters of India in the course of their struggle for emanicipation of the country. The discipline exemplified in their conduct needs special mention especially in these times. The narrator is not blind to the inadequacies, limitations and even weaknesses of these valiant heroes. But then his criticism is tempered with sympathy and understanding as to enable him to explain away several such undesirable features as products of those times. Yet he is free and frank when the occasion demands.

The historian in Mr. Sharma asserts himself when he tries his best to apply the yardsticks which he has set out to use. He denotes the 1847 uprising as a revolt. He is also constrained to remark, "The ideological inspiration for the national revolutionaries [prior to 1918] was mainly that of Hindu religious nationalism .." (p. 48, parantheses mine). In the chapter on 'Non-Cooperation and Revolutionaries' he brought out the fact that the Juganthar group of revolutionaries agreed to accept Gandhi's non-violent non-cooperation as a

strategy for the time and promised to work with it for one year without resorting to violent methods. He castigates the Mahatma for joining the Khilafat agitation and thereby adding strength and power to Muslim Fundamentalism. He does not fight shy to depict Moplah Rebellion in its true colours. Unlike many 'leftists' he is not enamoured of painting every struggle of the minorities as progressive. He is courageous enough to state that "... the rebellion of the 'brave and God fearing Moplahs' cannot be said to be a part and parcel of the national movement for Independence. On the contrary it was clearly against the general nationalist trend and at the best may be described as an anti-British, anti-Hindu, Muslim fanatic rebellion" (p. 134). He is all praise for Alluri Sitarama Raju who led the Girijans of the Agency Areas of Madras Presidency in rebellion against the British during 1922–24 though he has lamented the immaturity and inexperience of the great ascetic leader (p. 156).

Mr Sharma has dwelt at length on the revolutionary terrorism in the North. His admiration for Bhagat Singh and Chandra Sekhar Azad is immense and superb. Yet facts compel him to state that Bhagat Singh was prompted by 'Death-Wish' when he made the supreme sacrifice of his life. He pays glowing tributes to the programme of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. In those times, in his view, it was progressive. He portrays Chittagong uprising of 1930 in glorious colours and explains its role and significance. His chapter on 'Communism In India' being necessarily short, when compared to those on national revolutionaries, traces the history of that movement in a nutshell. He expresses the view "...if the communists had a novel and creative programme of work and a flexible and broad-minded approach and had they followed more the spirit of Marx and Lenin than that of Stalin and other dogmatic leaders of the Comintern, they could definitely have gained enormous mass following in this country even if unable to seize political power. In this sense, it was the lack of a real (not bookish) revolutionary theory and the consequent absence of a meaningful practice that has relegated the communists to the backyard of Indian political arena" (pp. 328–329).

The material covered by the author in his book – from primary and secondary sources – is at once vast in magnitude and prolific and variegated in its approach. This factor, as it should be, adds immensely to the value of the book.

The appendices to the book are meaningful The wealth of information and abundance of details contribute to the usefulness of the book. The interviews conducted by the writer with celebrated participants of the revolutionary struggles and informed persons enhance its utility and significance

One may agree or not with the opinions expressed and conclusions drawn in the book. Yet one cannot but appreciate the hard and assiduous work put in by the author, the meticulous care with which he gathered material and utilised it, the dispassionate manner in which he dealt with the subject and the sympathy and understanding which he has shown throughout with the independence struggle.

While commending this book to the discerning readers it is not inappropriate to hope that Mr Sharma will erelong undertake other ventures in the field of historiography.

Dt. 20 May 1987.
HYDERABAD. M, V. RAMAMURTY

AN OPINION :

A SCINTILLATING STUDY

I have gone through the most scintillating work of Mr. I. Mallikarjuna Sharma on 'The Role of Revolutionaries in the Freedom Struggle, 1918–34'. Though the substance of this book was originally intended for his M. Phil. dissertation, it serves as a master-piece of historical literature on the period concerned. Such books must be read by the present generation of Indian youth who are almost totally ignorant of the great role of the Indian revolutionaries. In political circles, there is a concerted effort to minimise their role.

Really Sharma seems to have taken great pains to exhaust all the available material in the field. Not only did he delve deep into the source material of various archives, but also perused a great many books on the subject. He undertook the stupendous task of interviewing some of the surviving light-houses of the revolutionary movement.

Through he is a student of history with leftist leanings, in dealing with Gandhiji and his philosophy, he is neither adulatory to magnifying heights nor denunciatory to abysmal depths. Personally he venerates Gandhiji. But regarding his policies he is thoroughly critical without using harsh terms. It is in refreshing contrast to the writings of some leftists.

Particularly interesting is his treatment of the Moplah rebellion. He has narrated the events in correct historical perspective without ignoring the clear communal dimensions. He has not over-estimated the so-called anti-*Jenmi* currents In this respect, he has fearlessly deviated from the track taken by some leftist writers

He has also thrown much flood of light on the communist movement in its initial stages as objectively as possible. If any communist reads it dispassionately, it is sure to evoke in him much introspection

I feel that every serious student of history will be much benefited and inspired by reading this commendable treatise of Mr. I Mallikarjuna Sharma.

B. LOCANADHAM

(Retired teacher and former communist activist of Bapatla).

PREFACE

This book is in partial fulfilment of a long-standing desire on my part to make an in-depth and critical study of the activities of the Indian Revolutionaries under the Bntsh Rule. My own participation in the Naxalite movement in 1968-78, and my continuing commitment to the cause of Communism and Revolution were, perhaps, the chief instigators of this desire ; but, in this connection, I cannot also rule out the prominent role of the pre-Marxian rebel in me who, right from my adolescence, was fomenting a fascination for revolutionaries in my heart of hearts. Here I should make it clear that this study was undertaken mainly for my self-clarification on many questions relating to the Indian Revolution ; and hence I may be forgiven if it does not fulfil all or many of the expectations of the readers. Then I have also to acknowledge that this is a carefully edited and slightly amended version of my M. Phil. dissertation on 'The Role of Revolutionaries in India's Independence Struggle, 1918-34', submitted to the Osmania University, Hyderabad ; but here I would also like to make it clear that I do not want to pass off the book under the credit of any University degree but desire that it should be judged on its own inherent merits.

As many people encouraged me, helped me in several ways, and fruitfully guided me now and then, it would be appropriate for me to first express my profound sense of gratitude to all such good-natured persons collectively. Then to name a few, I should profusely thank my M. Phil guide, Dr. A Satyanarayana ; my present Ph.D. supervisor, Dr. Sarojini Regani, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Osmania University; Dr. Vaikuntham, Head; and Mr. Isralel Mark, Reader, of the Department of History, O.U., for their kind guidance and supervision. I cannot forget the assistance rendered to me by the staff and fellow-students of this department. I am also very much grateful to the U.G.C. for its financial assistance by way of granting a Junior Research Fellowship to me, and to Sri P. V. Shastri, Depty. Registrar, and other staff members of the U.G.C. section in O.U., for the interest they took in my work. Further I am also very

much indebted to Dr. J. V. Raghavendra Rao, Dr. Satynarayana and Mr. Jaya Prakash Rao of the Department of Sociolgy, O.U., for their valuable help. My grateful acknowledgements are also due to Dr. V. Ramakrishna, Professor in History, University of Hyderabad.

I express my deep sense of gratitude towards all the veteran freedom fighters and communist/non-communist revolutionaries who unhesitatingly spared their precious time disregarding their frail health to talk to me about the history of the freedom struggle and give valuable guidance to my research work. I also take this occasion to pay homage to three of my interviewees – Sri Krovvidi Linga Raju of Rajamundry; Sri Bhupendra Chandra Mazumdar of Bengal, settled in Delhi; and Sri Nikunja Sen, a stalwart of the B.V., Calcutta, who passed away in the intervening period, and express my profound condolences to their bereaved families and friends.

Mention has to be made of the authorities and staff of the National Archives of India, New Delhi; The Nehru Memorial Library, New Delhi; The National Library, Calcutta; The Tamilnadu State Archives; The Connemera Public Library, Madras; The A P. State Archives, Hyderabad; The O.U. Library, the I.C S.S R. Library, and the A.S R C., Hyderabad, which permitted me to peruse important historical documents and books. My heart-felt thanks are due to the R.D A.S., Tarnaka, Secunderabad, for its generous financial and other assistance. My gratitude to friends in Delhi, to the 'Marxist Review' group of comrades in Calcutta, and to various other friends and well-wishers in various parts of Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu for their kind hospitality and valuable assistance, is to find expression here.

Further I should not fail to acknowledge my deep sense of gratitude to Sri K. G. Kannabiran, Sri Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Sri K. Pratap Reddy, Sri B. Locanadham, Sri M. Ranganadham, Sri Pratapa Ramasubbaiah, Smt. K. Manikyamba, Mr. K.Srinivasa Murthy, and all other colleagues and friends who encouraged and/or helped me in various ways. I express my heart-felt thanks to Sri M. V. Ramamurty who has written the Foreword.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not refer to the Proprietor, Sri K. Subba Rao, the other persons in management, and the workers of N. K. Printers, Punjagutta, Hyderabad, for having ungrudgingly and neatly carried out the printing and binding work ; and to Vijay Art Printers, Chikkadpalli, Hyderabad, for their prompt assistance in printing the Appendixes. I am also deeply indebted to Mr. Mohan for providing a strikingly attractive cover design, and can find no adequate words to express how much beholden I am to Rathan Prakash Paul for having sincerely and patiently assisted me in the laborious job of editing the manuscript.

Lastly, I should be beholden to my wife Balamani for her valuable assistance at every step. I am also grateful to my sisters, nieces, brothers-in-law (Gopal & Nandu), in-laws, and especially to my nephew, Karthik Sitaram, for their valuable assistance.

Finally, a word about the printing pattern. I have, in most of the cases, got printed the quotations in indent, and enclosed any of my comments or explanations in square brackets. An Errata for important mistakes, a Glossary and a fairly detailed Index are also provided at the end While I acknowledge the contributions of friends and well-wishers to enhance the merits of the book, I hereby make it clear that the responsibility for any defects and errors is entirely mine.

Dt. 20 May 1987. I. MALLIKARJUNA SHARMA.
Hyderabad.

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CHAPTER I

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION . . .

Much, I may even remark too much, has been written about the role of the Indian National Congress under the able and charismatic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the 'apostle of non-violence', in winning independence for India by an allegedly 'non-violent revolution' said to be 'unique' in the annals of human civilization. But not much, I may even say too little, has been said or written about the role of revolutionaries wedded to the cause of an armed revolution – of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh who at the height of their popularity even outfaced Mahatma Gandhi, or those like Bhagvati Charan who courted martyrdom 'unwept, unsung and unhonoured'-in 'wresting' freedom for India. This dissertation is but a humble attempt to fill this lacuna and deals with the *'Role of Revolutionaries in India's Independence Struggle, 1918–1934.'*

WHAT REVOLUTION MEANS

When so important a topic as the present one is being discussed, the first question which confronts us is as to what a revolution means and who a revolutionary is. This cardinal question needs to be satisfactorily answered before we can proceed to explain in any detail the subject matter under consideration. It is true that there are many 'sweet' as well as 'bitter' definitions of revolution and a scientific definition is direly needed. We will at least strive for an appropriate one.

It will be wrong to equate the mere efforts, successful or otherwise, to overthrow a government or regime-at-the-helm, by considerable sections or a majority of population in a system, with revolution. A rebellion or a *coup d'etat* would also attempt the same. Nor can we consider it to be an instance of mass hysteria generated by excessive state repression Even a rebellion, not to speak of a revolution, is more than mere mass hysteria. To characterise a revolution as a *maladie*

a typique, an inevitable but unwanted disease[1] will be highly unjust. General scholarly opinion on this question usually welcomes revolutions as heralders of progressive and much-needed social changes.

Here the definition of the noted French scholar Arthur Bauer that "Revolutions are changes attempted or achieved by force in the constitution of societies,"[2] would be more appropriate and is rather widely accepted. But this seems to be too laconic. Nor can we define a revolution as a form of violence only. As Hannah Arendt explains :

> . .violence is no more adequate to describe the phenomenon of revolution than change ; only where change occurs in the sense of a new beginning, where violence is used to constitute an altogether different form of government to bring about the formation of a new body politic where the liberation from oppression aims at least at the constitution of freedom, can we speak of revolution.[3]

But here the talk about freedom in abstract and implicit ideal of establishment of a republic as the final goal seems to run counter to the main idea in the modern world that a revolution aims at the creation not just of new political forms, but of a new kind of society and even of a new kind of man. Here the Marxian definition of revolution as the outbreak of the acute contradictions between the developing productive forces and restricting production relations, and, that it so radically changes the production relations as to be in conformity with free growth of productive forces, may be of much value. In fairness to Marx it should also be admitted that he did not overlook the influence of the cultural, religious, political and other factors as well in this process, but only stressed the ultimate primacy of economic necessity. Anyhow, it is exactly on this count that this definition stands to criticism as being incomplete and inappropriate. As if to bridge the gulf between liberal and marxian theories of revolution, Chalmers Johnson speaks of the distinction between simple revolutions which are said to aim at basic change in only a few values and total revolutions which are said to aim at the replacement of the entire structure of values and rearrangement of the entire

division of labour. But he also identifies the immediate causes of a revolution to be non-economic – the 'deflation of power' (of the ruling cliques or classes) coupled with 'loss of authority' (of the same) aggravated by the actions of an 'accelerator' (which includes the revolutionary party), causes a revolution.[4]

We should not also confuse revolution with rebellion. A rebellion, though a violent upheaval, does not aim at a radical change in the existing order of things but is rather akin to social surgery intended to cut out one or more members who are offending against the joint commitments to maintain the corpus of a particular social structure. A rebellion may not even possess any guiding ideology, but base itself on a functioning structure of values only.

To sum up, we may remark that revolutions are radical social changes in the form of sudden discharges and accelerated processes, caused by various factors among which the economic ones are of ultimate importance. These changes are almost invariably accompanied by the use of force, generally as a matter of last resort History has yet to provide us an example of a non-violent revolution though it may not altogether be an impossibility in future times. Anyway, all revolutions generally occur in the basic form of violent uprisings with the active participation of the masses The regular government is destroyed and a new one is installed. A philosophy and a policy of reconstruction invariably follow the ravages of destruction and are implemented with varying degrees of success A total failure may lead to the restoration of the old system with vengeance, i.e., to counter-revolution But an abortive revolution need not indefinitely strengthen reaction every time. Also, a revolution may be delayed but the efforts of revolutionaries may usher in some significant results. Generally, revolutions are considered beneficial to the progress of society.

Once we have more or less adequately defined revolution, thereafter it goes without saying that those who, with intent and zeal, strive to bring in such revolutions are called

revolutionaries. The difference is that whereas revolutions occur at times when the social contradictions are most intense to the point of out-break, revolutionaries can be found at almost all times. This is so because every generation of humankind consists of certain extremist, non-conformist sections or individuals who try to effect a radical change in the existing social system by extreme means including recourse to the use of force. However, if times are not adequately turbulent and ideals not sufficiently broad-minded, such sections/persons may be deemed to be fanatics indulging in anti-social operations. But many a time it becomes quite difficult to distinguish abortive revolutions from fanatic outbursts. We can safely say that one can never underestimate the impact of such revolutionary sections/individuals when a society is passing through testing times.

THREE MAIN CURRENTS OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE STRUGGLE

It is beyond doubt that the period of British Rule in India witnessed many a testing time. Right from the great rebellion of 1857 down to the Royal Indian Navy revolt of 1946 – it is an epic saga of mutinies, revolts, terrorist raids, mass upheavals and various other violent and non-violent struggles against the British rule. The Pax Britanica was found to be existent more in breach than in conformity. The years 1857–58, 1905–07, 1914–16, 1919–22, 1929–34, 1942–43, and 1945–47 were in particular quite turbulent times when the majestic British Empire in India was shaken to its very foundations. The Post–War upsurge of 1945–47 can be said to have acted as the proverbial last straw which broke the back of the British rule once for all.

In spite of all such struggles, it is still controversial and debatable as to whether India's struggle for freedom can be termed revolutionary in the real sense of the word. Firstly, because inspite of stout resistance at home, the British rulers of India were forced to quit the country mainly due to the heavy blows dealt to their economy and military capabilities in the world war II, i.e., mainly due to external causes. The internal causes only hastened their exit, though it is quite

probable that it they were to obstinately hold to their guns in India they would have been ignominously ousted by the then imminent revolution. They were wise enough to see the writing on the wall and preferred an orderly and final exit Secondly, it has to be admitted that the major current of the national struggle since 1919 was based on the Gandhian concept of truth and non-violence and conducted by peaceful and legitimate means under the leadership of the Indian National Congress As already remarked, a basically non-violent and peaceful struggle can scarcely be termed revolutionary. A detailed discussion of this aspect is done in the next chapter.

However, it is indisputable that there was a galaxy of revolutionaries in that period who tried with their mite to overthrow the British imperialist rule and rebuild India on democratic/socialist lines In addition to the major current of the Indian National Congress, various other movements, violent and peaceful, contributed to the downfall of the British rule. The renowned Bengali scholar Sri Chinmohan Sehanavis (Chinu Babu) has identified in all, nine streams of struggle contributing to the demise of the British rule in India. They are : 1 Adivasi struggles of the 18th and 19th centuries, 2. Mutinies or attempts at mutiny; 3. Struggles of the peasants and the village poor, in the beginning led by Zamindars, Rajahs and religious leaders; 4. Wahabi-Farzi movement; 5. Awakening of the English-educated Indian middle classes and the constitutional agitation ; 6 The Indian National Congress , 7. National Revolutionary (or the terrorist) movement; 8. Organized working class, peasant, students & women's struggles led in the main by the communists; and finally, 9. The States' peoples' movements.[5] Obviouly, not all the categories mentioned above were inspired with the zeal to overthrow the British rule, and also, all these streams are not of basic importance. Hence, I am content with identifying the three main currents of India's struggle for independence, based on their open avowal of, and political agitation for, the ideal of Swaraj or of Complete Independence. It is also noteworthy that all other streams mentioned by Chinu Babu are to a large extent influenced, if not always led, by the political leadership belonging to the three main currents. They are : 1. The

Gandhian, peaceful forms of struggles conducted by the Indian National Congress, 2. The national revolutionary or the 'terrorist' struggles; 3. The Communist movement. Barring the first, the other two are clearly revolutionary and contemplate the use of force to overthrow the foreign rule. Again, both these movements had their respective programmes for the reconstruction of a new society after such an overthrow, though it must be conceded that the Communists were better equipped in this regard. So none of these two movements can be termed merely rebellious.

SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE

The enormous significance of the topic selected becomes evident if we realize that,

> .. the history of the early epoch of the fight for India's freedom was exclusively the story of the revolutionary movement of armed struggle and it was later that the urge for national emanicipation sought expressi-on through different channels and different ways, but all objectively uniting in its effect to evolve progressively higher ideas and greater strength for the liberation movement. But the revolutionary struggle that had created the first stir in the country and inspired the nation to challenge the foreign might, continued through all the decades upto the last moment that brought the country's political emanicipation. This is historical fact that does not need recognition or non-recognition from any quarter ... .. the history of the revolutionaty movement is yet unwritten...[6]

The present study bears another significance as well. It covers the period from 1919 to 1934 – quite a momentous period in the history of the Indian Freedom Struggle. Apart from the conceptual objections to categorise Gandhian peaceful, non-violent struggles as revolutionary, we may point out that during the greater part of this period the Congress and its leader, Gandhi, were still working for a sort of Swaraj within the British Empire. So much so that even after the Complete Independence resolution was passed at the Lahore Congress

at the midnight of December 31, 1929, Gandhi within a few days, watered down the real effect of the resolution by declaring that he was prepared for the substance of independence i e., (implicitiy) accepting the British suzeranty, if not sovereignty. We may also note that he had come to a 'truce' with Lord Irwin in 1931, the second clause of the agreement being the virtual abandonment by the Congress of its demand for full independence. *It was only the national revolutionaries and communists who consistently took a clear-cut stand of demanding complete independence and calling for the overthrow of the British imperialist rule*. The formation and early growth of the communist party, the rise and decline of the non-violent movements, the birth, growth and martyrdom of a new generation of 'socialistic oriented' revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh, Azad etc , the spate of conspiracy cases instituted by the British, the heroic Chittagong Armoury raid - all these historic events belong to this period. Coming to the South, the tragic Moplah rebellion of Malabar and the heroic 'Rampa Fituri' led by Alluri Srirama Raju in the Agency tracts of Andhra also fall within this period. Since the theory and practice of non-violence took shape under the personal leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in this very period, a comparison of the roles played by the peaceful and the revolutionary movements of the day would be very apt

It goes with out saying that I limit my study to a careful observation of, and necessary comments on, the activities of national revolutionaries and communists in this period. Though it would have been very revealing and of the utmost value if I could delve deeply into the socio-economic conditions and psychological motives underlying the activities of revolutionaries, I regret to acknowledge my failure in this respect. The subject proved to be too vast and of fearful proportions and has to be relegated to subsequent and prolonged studies. But of course, whenever possible, in addition to mere narration of events and developments, I also tried to identify the main socio-economic factors behind them. I have also concentrated on the political side of the movements rather than the ideological, but I think I took sufficient care of the latter aspect also. Further, I have not, with some ex-

ceptions, dealt with other mass movements, trade union struggles, tribal revolts etc., which also had a contributory effect on the freedom struggle. Within the two currents of national revolutionary and communist movements, I bestowed larger attention on, and invested with greater detail, the study of the former, if only because the national revolutionaries were more thoroughly, whole-heartedly, single-mindedly and self-sacrificingly involved in the primary task of delivering the mother land from British strangle-hold. In addition to the general discourse on the ideological conflict of violence vs. non-violence, I have, whenever the occass on arose, compared the relative roles of the revolutionary and peaceful struggles at important junctures in the history of our freedom struggle.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As already stated, the history of revolutionary movements in India is still largely unwritten. Considerable number of reminiscences by veteran revolutionaries are published, but mainly in regional languages. Most of the accounts of revolutionary movements in Bengal and the reminiscences of Bengali revolutionaries are available in Bengali only They almost exclusively concentrate on the revolutionary movement in Bengal. There are some good books in Hindi on the subject which again miss a lot of information about Bengal and the South. There are considerable number of books about this topic in Marathi and Punjabi, but very few books in Telugu. There are a number of books and articles on this topic in English, but the number is quite insufficient and the coverage not satisfactory compared to the vast breadth and immense depth of the subject concerned.

First of all I should admit with many regrets that my ignorance of Bengali, Punjabi and Marathi prevented me from benefiting from whatever revelations made in the books in these languages. So here I would limit myself to a review of the literature in English and to some extent of the books in Hindi and Telugu

It has to be noted with regret that almost all general works on the history of the freedom struggle neglect or very much minimise the part played by the national revolutionaries and communists. The official historian of the history of Freedom struggle in India, Dr. Tarachand, does not deal with the activities of revolutionaries in any proper way and simply dismisses their accounts with a few lifeless sentences. He has not done even that amount of justice to the topic as done by the illustrious official historian of the Congress, Sri Bhogaraju Pattabi Sitaramiah. Sri Sitaramaiah devotes about 4 pages to the accounts and lively discussion of the activities of Jatindas, Bhagat S ngh and his comrades, but does not properly assess the contribution of the revolutionary movement as a whole. Moreover, it is quite surprising to find him relegating to a foot-note the heroic uprising at Chittagong. The real historiography of Girija K. Mookerjee, in stark contrast to his bombastic preface to his 'History of Indian National Congress' should be judged very poor by any standards and he does not even seem to know that two other revolutionaries besides Bhagat Singh were executed on the same day and on the same gallows! Also, he seems to be blissfully ignorant of the heroic Chittagong Uprising even though its undisputed leader Masterda Surjya Sen was, after all, the duly elected secretary of the then Chittagong District Congress Committee! Likewise the documents compiled by Jagadish S. Sharma are devoid of any reference to the national revolutionaries. The official History of the Freedom struggle in Andhra edited by Late Sri Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiah is more like a jotting-of-points and publishing of some important source materials and lacks the necessary connective interpretations. 'The History of Freedom movement in India' in 3 volumes by the world-famous historian Dr. R. C. Mazumdar and 'India's struggle-A quarter Century' by the veteran revolutionary, A. C. Guha, seem to be exceptions to this general trend. Sri A. C. Guha has given wide coverage to the activities of revolutionaries but his overall assessment of the roles of different revolutionary organisations as well as the part played by the revolutionary movement as a whole is not satisfactory. In addition, both

these works do not give adequate coverage to the activities of the communists.

Then we have many particular histories and studies. The Anushilan Samiti of Bengal published the first volume of its history under the title 'Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samithi' edited by Budhadeva Bhattacharya, which gives valuable information about the organisational and programmatic details of this premier revolutionary organisation of pre-independence Bengal. Baba Sohan Singh Josh's two volumes on the Ghadar Party are also quite revealing. Sri Manmath Nath Gupta's 'History of the Indian revolutionary movement' though it proposes to cover the whole gamut of revolutionaries from 'raw terrorists to sophisticated Marxists' is in reality only a quite readable account of the national revolutionaries and mainly focusses on their activities in N. India. "Bengal Terrorism and Marxist Left" by David M. Laushey is a very laudable scholarly work limited by its very scope to the activities of revolutionaries in that region. 'Terrorism in India' by Saileswar Nath deals extensively with the activities of national revolutionaries in Bihar. Finally, we cannot minimise the great value of 'the Roll of Honour' by Sri Kalicharan Ghosh, but it has to be admitted that it is only a compendium of biographical sketches of so many martyrs and connective historiography is missing in it The 'Who's Who of Indian Martyrs' in 3 vols., (ed) P.N. Chopra, is also of much use in this regard.

The Government reports, once secret now published, like 'Political Trouble in India' by J. C. Ker, The Sedit on committee Report, 'Terrorism in India' (1917-1936) are indispensable sources of authentic information regarding the inner working of various revolutionary organisations but, by their nature, are prone to reflect in general, the outlook and sentiments of the imperalist government and hence to that extent, are to be deemed as 'colored' if not 'doctored' reports.

Now to deal with the books in the national languages. The three volumes of 'Singhavalokan' by Yashpal, furnish very

valuable source material for the history of Hindustan Republican Association and its later variant the H.S.R A, but we should be aware of its limitations which any primarily autobiographical work suffers from. The same may be said of Sri Manmath Nath Gupta's 'Bhagat Singh Aur Unka Yug' and 'Azad Aur Unka Yug' though it should be admitted that he took a more objective view of things. In Telugu, there are no standard books on revolutionary movements in India as a whole but some very good biographies of Alluri Srirama Raju, the heroic leader of the Rampa Fituri. 'Alluri Seetharama Raju Charitra' – seperate biographies by Ponnaluri Radhakrishna Murthy, Kodali Lakshminarayana, Dr. J. Mangamma and D. V. Rama Raju are praise-worthy attempts in this regard.

Finally, there are quite a number of good books on the history of the Communist movement of which the pride of place should go to the official compilation of "The documents of the History of the Communist Party of India" in many volumes, edited by G. Adhikari and others. Then the secret intelligence reports by Kaye (1919-1924), Petrie (1924-27) and Williamson (1928-34), also contain precious primary source material. 'Communism in India' by Overstreet and Windmiller, is yet another revealing book. Then there are autobiographical and biographical writings like "Myself and the C.P.I." by Muzafar Ahmad and "Singaravelu-the First Communist in South India" by Subramanyan and Murugesan. Many of the above books suffer from one sidedness and do not adequately portray the role of the Communists in relation to the general national movement of those days.

In conclusion, I may say that an intelligent, analytical and tenacious effort to sketch and review the revolutionary movements of the freedom struggle period after an all-sided and in depth study of its various aspects, to 'see the trees as well as the woods' is the need of the day. And this book is but a small attempt in that direction.

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CHAPTER II

CONFLICT OF IDEOLOGY : VIOLENCE Vs NON-VIOLENCE

"Without a revolutionary ideology there is no revolutionary movement."[1] These well-known words of Lenin underline, in utmost brevity, the indispensable necessity of an ideology guiding a revolutionary movement. The great struggle for India's independence from the British Empire was also guided by not one but at least two (or three) mutually contradictory ideologies. They chiefly pertained to the nature of the means to be used in pursuance of a common end. Of course, even regarding the socio-economic goals to be achieved, there were material differences between the various currents of the freedom movement, but in so much as the fighters belonging to all the currents concurred in the principal goal of liberating the country from the British rule, we can emphatically assert that they were working towards a common political end. However, the ideological differences can be described, in a nutshell, as reflecting the contradiction between the theories of "ends justify the means" and "means justify the ends."

How far the struggle for India's independence can be termed revolutionary in the real sense is a matter of controversy. But there is no doubt that it embodied much that can be termed revolutionary ; and the minor, but in no way insignificant, currents of national revolutionaries and the communists were patently revolutionary. The major current led by the charismatic leadership of that great apostle of non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi, presents us with a paradox of politically revolutionary goals (at least from 1928 onwards) coupled with ideologically non-revolutionary means.

Mahatma Gandhi was the chief proponent of the theory of "means justify the ends," with its unmistakable implication

of truth and non-violence as the guiding ideology. Every generation of mankind finds itself dissatisfied with, and agitated over, the then existing socio-political system. It sets some high ideals of future society and strives to achieve it in the present or near future by recourse to any means available at hand. Since by its very content human nature is imperfect and the cherished goal cannot but be somewhat vague and hazy, there is every possibility of the present being vitiated by foul methods or misguided means in pursuance of any future Utopia. The achievement of the ideal, being almost always a mere possibility, can elude the people in the event of unforeseen changes in circumstances, or also because the very ideal was not framed according to the necessities and trends of the existing circumstances. Hence, the people striving after the ideal may, if they are not sufficiently wise and cautious in the adoption of their means, be forced into a position where they will be 'neither here nor there!' In the quest for an illusory Golden Era of the future, they will be doing an irreparable damage to the present and thus defeating their own ends. Hence, the adoption of the right means is a must for the achievement of a right end. When we are aiming at a future society free of all exploitation, violence, untruth etc., it is, to say the least, quite uncertain whether we can achieve it by adopting violent, untrue, deceitful etc., means in the present. Moreover, in the hope of improving and ennobling human nature in the future, we will be debasing and demoralizing it in the present, which by itself is sufficient to defeat the cherished end. This is the crux of the Gandhian theory of "means justify the ends."

Nobody can deny that there is considerable force and truth in these arguments, and all well-meaning social reformers and revolutionaries invariably stressed on a type of consonance between the means and the ends. Generally, they would only opt for the right sort of means for the achievement of right ends. But all practical revolutionaries did and should take into account the necessity and importance of exceptions and at times an exception may be as material as the general rule. Then there is the eternal controversy of

what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' so far as the means are concerned. There is a powerful counter-argument which emphasises that means by themselves are value-neutral and it is the motive with which they are used and the end for which they are employed that really count Also, the concept of 'right' and 'wrong' of things may itself vary according to changing circumstances. Finally does the saying that 'means justify the ends' mean that the means adopted are ends by themselves, that the end cherished does not matter much ? So, we should realize that many revolutionaries who adopted the 'ends justify the means' theory were not unaware of these questions and were in no way un-ethical in the adoption of their means, but only opted for the much needed flexibility in this respect. But we see that the Gandhian ideology suffers from grave defects on these counts.

Gandhi has freely borrowed (and, of course, enriched the borrowed ideas too) from Ruskin, Thoreau and Tolstoy He also imbibed the cult of non-violence from the ancient Hindu, Buddhist and Jain traditions and from his study of Jesus Christ's preachings. From Ruskin, he learnt to appreciate the social value of sentiment, the advocacy of a socialism of the heart, the necessity of a hierarchal society animated by a virtuous leader and tied together by mutual respect for the value of the service supplied by each rank and the greatness of making service, and not competition, the purpose of life. It was as if the still unformed and seminal ideas and aspirations in his mind were at once given true form and vital growth by Ruskin's "Unto This Last"[2] From Thoreau's 'Civil Disobedience', Gandhi drew sufficiently to give a concrete shape to his theories of *satyagraha*, and non-cooperation.[3] Tolstoy gave him inspiration to practise the higher ethical values in the present life by embarking on an ascetic and communal living in specially built Ashrams, along with some dedicated followers.[4] The difference between Gandhi and these three of his illustrious mentors is that whereas they preached, he practiced; whereas they confined themselves mainly to the ethical sphere, Gandhi brought their ethical precepts into the practice of political movements. In Hutchin's view he employed Ruskin's theories to overturn a political order.[5]

Gandhi also tried, but failed in practice, to improve upon the ideas of those mentors. He was averse to term his theory of rightful resistance as passive resistance. He witnessed, while he was in England, that the suffragettes who were passive resisters did take to extreme methods of pelting stones, burning buses etc. Any resistance, short of direct violent attacks on the persons of the opponents, i. e., short of open armed struggle and bloodshed, could be covered by the concept of passive resistance So he wanted to call his method as that of positive resistance and the most noble and extreme stage of that to be *satyagraha* or truthful insistence (fury).

> *Satyagraha* differs from Passive Resistance as the north pole from the south. The latter has been conceived as a weapon of the weak and does not exclude the use of physical force or violence for the purpose of gaining one's end; whereas the former has been conceived as a weapon of the strongest, and excludes the use of violence in any shape or form.[6] .. Passive Resistance is a weapon of the weak. It does not eschew violence as a matter of principle but out of sheer expediency. It would use arms if and when they are available, or when there is a reasonable chance of success. Love has no place in it. Satyagraha on the other hand, is the law of love for all.[7]

He made it clear that the aim of satyagraha is the conversion of the opponent to one's own view by self-suffering and not by violence. About the Gandhian-led movements and the various nuances of their essential aspects, we can only quote the official historian of the Indian National Congress:

> ...recent political developments have ultimately evolved a movement which in its earlier manifestations had, from time to time, assumed different aspects under different names. As passive resistance it was a movement of bitterness and pride which had perhaps even a tinge in it of hatred and violence. As non-co-operation, it was an attitude of sulky and sullen people, angry with their rulers and anxious to wound but

unwiling to strike. When it was Civil Disobedience, it took time to emphasise the adjective equally with the noun. On the whole the idea of civility, little understood at first, gradually gained ground and paved the way for the next development of the idea to the level of Satyagraha. Ere long, we saw that the basis of Satyagraha was nothing short of love and non-violence. Non-violence was not merely to be a negative factor, but a positive force and was equivalent to "that love which does not burn others, but burns itself to death"...

Satyagraha is really a compendium of all the virtues known to man, for Truth is the mainspring of such virtues, and non-violence or love is its envelope. The country was thus plunged into a world of new values in which hatred and abhorrance, fear and cowardice, anger and vengeance were at once to yield place to love, courage, patience, self-suffering and chastity ; in which, too, wealth was to yield place to service, and in which the enemy is not to be conquered but converted ... Every Satyagrahi is a seeker after truth and must therefore, give up the fear of man, of Government, of society, of poverty and of death. Non-co-operation as a discipline, as a sadhana to achieve our ends, has, therefore, become a means of training in self-sacrifice pursued in that true spirit of humility which alone begets courage and not in that spirit of pride which generates fear. Thus, in a bound, has the author of the movement sublimated and spiritualised the sordid politics of the day.

Let us study the implications of the movement a little further. It furnishes a real key to an understanding of the basis of Indian society. That basis which is epitomised in the simple sutra, Ahimsa Paramodharmah and in the simple prayer, lokah samastah sukhino bhavanthu, is a positive force which is not only self-effacing but enjoins on every one to love those

that hate us, in the true spirit of the Sermon on the Mount. To do good unto him that doth you good is at best a business proposition. To be non-violent to a person who is loving and kind-hearted is to claim virtue for not being brutal or diabolical Satyagraha is not meant to over-power Vasishta or Janaka, and when people ask in despair how non-violence can fight the physical force of the British, we ask whether Satyagraha would not be superfluous and thrown out of fight if the opponents were saints. It is our old, old concepts and values that drive us to this kind of despair The teaching of the West that life is a survival of the fittest, in which the weaker must go to the wall, has made such deep impression upon us that it has only inflamed our passions and made us imbibe the vices of pride and its accompaniments which but engender cowardice and violence.

.. ..

When all is said, there is still an element of doubt in the potency or appropriateness of non-violence as a factor in the settlement of political disputes. The one argument against those to whom doubt occurs naturally is that, circumstanced as we are, non-violence, while it is unassailable as a principle in life, is unquestionable and unquestioned as a policy. The task of infusing life into a large mass of subject people like the Indians would be impossible, were it not for the avowal of, and adherence to, the principle of non-violence. People there are who would argue that Non-violent Non-Co-operation has failed, but not one has undertaken, to bring success in one bound, notably when the mass of the population has been slow in taking to the new movement. Non-violence is the only abiding principle which can bring peace and contentment to the two opposing parties, for, when once violence is installed on the throne of arbitrament, it is a weapon that can be used, as has already been pointed out, alike by the victor and the

> vanquished, leaving no end to vendetta and making life move eternally in a vicious circle.[8]

I should be excused if after such a long quotation from Sri Sitaramaiah, I should trouble the reader with another extract but coming as it is from the mouth of the lion itself, I hope it will prove very illuminating:

> I felt that it (the Bhagavad Gita) was not a historical work, but that, under the guise of physical warfare, it described the duel that perpetually went on in the hearts of mankind, and that physical warfare was brought in merely to make the description of the internal duel more alluring ... ...
>
> The author of the Gita, by extending meanings of words [Gandhi gives analogies of the extension of the meanings of 'sacrifice' and 'sannyasa' by the author of the Gita-IMS.] has taught us to imitate him. Let it be granted that according to the letter of the Gita it is possible to say that warfare is consistent with the renunciation of fruit. But after 40 years' unremitting endeavour fully to enforce the teaching of the Gita in my own life, I have, in all humility felt that perfect renunciation is impossible without perfect observance of ahimsa in every shape and form.[9]

I have, in sufficient detail, dealt with the conceptual and ethical side of Gandhi's philosophy (or ideology or creed) of non-violence and truth. Even here we find certain defects and contradictions For instance, what do the sentimental mouthings about "the law of love, and the way of love for all" mean?[10] When Gandhi described the British Rule as 'satanic' and said it has to be 'ended if it cannot be mended', was he in real spirit, following his own precepts? If love and hatred are two mutually opposite and mutually indispensable qualities, then how can one stress on love towards all without underscoring hatred towards something? If that something only means the universal evil present in each and every man, then why dabble in day-to-day politics? Similarly, is it

possible for you to transform the opponent by self-suffering unless the opponent has some considerable amount of sympathy with you? If as Hutchins says it be true that any fast directed against an implacable antagonist is unlikely to succeed in bringing about a change of heart, and that Gandhi fasted only in carefully defined circumstances,[11] then does it not strike at the very root of the claim of satyagraha to be the most novel and effective weapon of soul-force?

But if we come down from the ethical or spiritual side of Gandhian truth and non-violence to the stark realities of the day and the actual course of its implementation in practice, it will be an eye-opener in the real sense. There is nothing much in the Non-Co-operation movement (but for the loud and profuse protestations of truth and non-violence by Gandhi and other leaders) which was not already put into practice in Bengal during the anti-partition Swadeshi movement of 1905–07. The cult of non-violence could in no way stop violent distrurbances in many places during 1921–22, and the abrupt suspension of the movement following the Chauri Chaura killings in February, 1922, only testified to the futility of insisting on absolute non-violence in the course of an earth-shaking agitation. During 1930–31, Gandhi could only begin the Civil Disobedience movement with the clear knowledge that violent outbreaks were sure to follow and also with the undertaking that this time the movement would not be suspended that way (i. e., in the way the Non-Co-operation movement was suspended after Chauri Chaura). The 1942 movement which was meant to be a peaceful rebellion, in fact became a very large violent upheaval taking the lives of thousands of people and hundreds of opponents. Whatever be the noble conceptions and guidelines of Gandhi and his other devoted followers, these movements can in no sense be described by any other term but passive resistance. It is noteworthy that all revolutions, however violent they may become in due course, invariably apply these tactics of passive resistance, generally in the initial stages but at times at almost all the stages. The use of force (other than the

compelling powers of passive resistance) is generally made the last resort in almost all revolutions

The national revolutionaries and the communists of the day also countered Gandhism on similar grounds. The very context of the Gita where Lord Krishna implores the dejected Arjuna to kill the enemies, even if they be his own kinsmen, disinterestedly, in the interests of Dharma, was cited by the national revolutionaries (and quite rightly so) as the justification of the use of violence in the interests of justice. Even conceding Gandhi's interpretation that the real intention of the author of the Gita was only to depict the inner duel between the good and the evil inside the human soul, there seems to be no earthly reason as to why that which holds right for the individual soul should not prove useful for human collectivity as such. The trite argument that 'murder is murder whatever be the motive behind it and hence abhorrable and condemnable', does not cut ice with any reasonable person since we not only do not condemn the acts of the soldiers of one's country murdering the soldiers of the other (i.e., enemy) country, but also glorify those acts as great deeds of patriotism That this attitude is not limited to the small fry like us is amply demonstrated by the attitude of Gandhi towards a national army[12] and his own endeavours to recruit soldiers for World War I and his still infamous role in the Anglo-Boer war. Hence, the context in which violence is used, murders are committed, etc., occupies central importance. The American War of Independence and the English Civil War preceding that, the Great French Revolution, the indomitable struggles of the Irish Freedom Fighters and the Glorious October Socialist Revolution of 1917 – all of them only confirmed the generally accepted theories that it was right to rebel against the oppressors and it was just to use force against the usurpers.

Here we have to deal with some historical facts also. First of all, the revolutionary movement was an integral part of the wider national movement. The revolutionaries of the cult of the bomb in 1905–1908 in Bengal were, in a sense,

only complementary to the passive resisters of the Swadeshi movement then raging all over Bengal This phenomenon recurred almost at every step So much so that

> ...even after Mahatma Gandhi had emerged as the undisputed leader of the national movement for freedom ... ... armed action on many fronts intensified rather than slackened .. ... In this new phase, revolutionaries integrated their movement with the Gandhi movement and in numerous instances, utilised the National Congress platform to advance their cause. The two currents intermingled as the national struggle continued until during the August Revolution of 1942 a synthesis occurred and the Indian masses went over to active resistance and offensive warfare casting aside non-violent passive resistance. The final act of the Indian national struggle was staged in East Asia under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose when a well-organized national revolutionary army mounted a general assault on British Imperialism. This assault was the sum total of India's efforts of a half-a-century and a shining example of a synthesis of all currents of our national revolution [13]

Secondly, before the advent of Gandhi in Indian politics in a big way in 1919, the revolutionary movement was the only militant movement in India Other movements could not be called movements in the real sense since they believed in the begging bowl. [14]

Thirdly, to put it in the words of that illustrious revolutionary, Sri Bhupendra Nath Dutta –

> The Indian struggle for freedom is a continuous one. Sometimes it is violent, sometimes it is non-violent. Sometimes one group is active, then scattered, sometimes the thread is taken up by another group. But all worked for the same goal – Freedom of the

> Mother land. It cannot be denied that the revolutionary movement has been a great lever in the fight for independence. Hindu and Muslim, Sikh and Parsi, Men and women have given their lives for it I remember and pay my respects to those who have died in various parts of the world for the cause of the motherland, those whose bones are bleaching in the deserts of Mesopotamia and Iran, those who have been burnt and those who have been unburnt, and those who have laid their lives on the gallows.[15]

Another point which needs clarification here is that these national revolutionaries were not anarchists or mere terrorists.

> The revolutionaries do not aim at creating anarchy or chaos While it is a fact that they do occassionally resort to terrorism, their ultimate object is not terrorism but revolution and the purpose of revolution is to instal a National Government [16]

They were forthright in their espousal of terrorism as a necessary and effective means for achieving revolution and independence They opined that the deliverance of their country was possible only through a revolution which would not only overthrow the foreign government but also usher in a new social order. They emphasized that terrorism was not complete without revolution and so was revolution without terrorism. Terrorism which was said to shatter the spell of the superiority of the ruling class would develop into a revolution and the revolution would bring independence—social, political and economic.[17]

National revolutionaries and Communists strongly countered the fad of non-violence then prevalent in the country under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi's teachings. They ridiculed the then current fashion of indulging in wild and meaningless talk about non-violence and made it amply clear that in a world armed to the teeth and with regard to a slave

nation like India, it was simply 'a mid-summer night's dream' to expect deliverance through non-violence They asserted that they did believe in violence; not, however, as an end in itself but as a means to a noble end [18]

The Communists made their position clear on this cardinal question of violence vs. non-violence as early as in 1922:

> ... the Government maintained by violence and brute force cannot be overthrown without violence and brute force, the pious desire of the Mahatma and our 'spiritual civilisation' not withstanding ...,

so wrote M. N. Roy, that illustrious national revolutionary turned communist, then in exile, in the 'Vanguard' of June 15th, 1922. A message, in fact drafted by M. N. Roy, but coming from the Communist International to the 37th All India National Congress at Gaya was more emphatic:

> British rule in India was established by force and is maintained by force; therefore it can and will be overthrown only by a violent revolution. We are not in favour of resorting to violence if it can be helped; but for self-defence, the people of India must adopt violent means, without which the foreign domination based upon violence cannot be ended. [19]

In addition to calling for a violent revolution, the Comintern also exhorted the Congress to adopt a comprehensive and revolutionary socio-economic programme and a political programme for the establishment of a Democratic Republic, completely independent of any foreign control.

The pamphlet, *The Revolutionary*, written by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and distributed, in one day, by revolutionaries all over British India—from Peshawar to Rangoon, argued as early as in 1925, that,

> ... the foreign rule must be abolished. They have no justification to rule over India except the justifica-

tion of the sword, and therefore the revolutionary party has taken to the sword. But the sword of the revolutionary party bears ideas at its edge.[20]

It called for the establishment of a Federal Republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution The republic should abolish all exploitation of man by man and for this the party is said to follow 'the footsteps of the great Indian Rishis of the glorious past and of Bolshevik Russia in the modern age'.[21] It promised co-operation with the Congress whenever possible but at the same time ridiculed all constitutional agitations and mocked at the idea of achieving India's salvation through constitutional means when, in fact, there existed no constitution at all. It exposed the self-deception behind the avowal of peaceful and legitimate means for the achievement of India's independence when the enemy was bent upon breaking peace at his own convenience, and when the term 'legitimate' lost all its charm and significance when one pledged himself to maintain peace at all costs.[22]

Regarding the allegations of anarchism and terrorism against it, the pamphlet made it clear that the revolutionaries neither believed that terrorism could alone bring independence nor did they desire terrorism for terrorism's sake. But they did advocate and resort to terrorism to undo the fear-psychosis in the minds of the subject Indians, to retaliate official terrorism and create a fear in the hearts of the English masters, and to focus the problem of Indian Independence on the international scene. However terrorism was never the object of the revolutionaty party ; but to organise a band of selfless and devoted workers who would care more for the country than for their comfort, or for their own lives, or for the lives of those whom they loved.[23]

Further, the pamphlet "The Philosophy of the Bomb," a manifesto of the Hindustan Socialst Republican Assiocation, presented an interesting argument in support of their methods and with regard to the controversy of violence vs. non-violence. It defined violence as physical force applied for commi-

tting injustice, and denied that the revolutionaries ever stood for it. It explained that non-violence implied the theory of soul-force to achieve justice. The difference between Mahatma Gandhi and the revolutionaries was that whereas the Mahatma limited himself to the use of soul-force alone, the revolutionaries would supplement such use with the use of necessary physical force also. Both the Gandhians and the revolutionaries, however, were said to work for the same end of the acceptance of truth and achievement of justice.[24] The widespread awakening of the masses could not be assigned to the theory of non-violence. Such awakening manifested itself wherever a programme of direct action was adopted Moreover, the mania for non-violence and Gandhi's compromising mentality wrecked the forces that came together for mass action. Whenever non-violence was tried, it was only blessed with one result—Failure, and the Satyagraha advocated by Gandhi was only a protest, leading invariably to a compromise. As such the people striving for national independence could and should never subscribe to this theory of non-violence and compromise.[25]

Lest we confuse revolutionaries with mere violence-mongering extremists, it is worthwhile to quote the words of certain revolutionists :

> The revolutionary movement was vehemently attacked by the Britishers and many faithful Indians joined the chorus to denounce their activities. A glance at the history of the revolutionary movement will reveal that the revolutionaries fought for certain principles, embodied in their declarations from time to time. To them the question of India's freedom was a question of life and death. To those who were silent spectators to the ever-beginning, never-ending wanton repression, the sacrifice of those revolutionaries gave a new philosophy, the philosophy of not surrendering their rights before the tyrants' oppressions, not to yield their right of asserting the cause of their country's freedom, and not to bow their heads before the powerful and the mighty British Empire.[26]

So said Jogesh Chatterji, one of the founders of the Hindutan Republican Association.

> The revolutionaries were advocates of all possible means. For them violence or non-violence were only questions of effective weapons under a certain set of conditions. Profoundly humanist in outlook, they have repeatedly pointed out that violence was forced on them as an evil necessity by the British imperialists who left them little choice ...... they have drawn liberally lessons from and also inspiration from the best of the world revolutionary movements, e.g., from the Irish, Chinese, Japanese, Italian, French and Russian revolutionary movements ...... In popular mind the revolutionary movement is associated with deeds of heroism and romantic adventure That it had great clarity of thought, historical perspective and a capacity to assimilate new ideas in its dynamic course, is little known.[27]

So clarifies Sri Bejoy Kumar Sinha.

We have extensively gone through the notions and arguments of the devotees of non-violence and of revolutionaries. What needs to be still clarified is the fact that until the advent of Gandhi into Indian politics, this non-violence was never elevated to such a high pedestal and people refrained from, or were afraid of, recourse to violence only because of the extremely weak and disarmed position of the Indians before the mighty British imperialists. Openly admitted to or not, non-violence was only a matter of political expediency with them and even the so called loyalists secretly cherished admiration and sympathy for the revoutionaries. Upto the end of World War I, more specifically upto 1919, the Congress was an organisation openly committed to an unswerving loyalty to the British Crown and striving for certain reforms by mere legal and constitutional methods. This was detested as 'politics of mendicancy', not only by the revolutionaries but also by extremist Congress leaders like Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai who, however, could not openly call for a violent revolu-

tion or a militant movement for independence. They simply adopted the peaceful and non-violent forms of struggle since India was disarmed and could not drive away the foreigner by force. To a fulminating Hyndman who was vexed with the insipid and impotent manner of Dada Bhai Naoroji's journal *India*, and his public activities, even that Grand Old Man had conceded this much.

> *India* represents Indians, not Englishmen and India can only speak as Indians should. ... ... The Government are now openly taking up a Russian attitude, and we are helpless. The mass of the people do not yet understand the position. John Bull does not understand the bark. *He only understands the bite, and we cannot do this.* [28]

In yet another revealing letter to Wacha, dated 12-1-1905, The Grand Old Man of India did hit the nail on its head.

> The very discontent and impatience it [The Congress] has evoked against itself as slow and non-progressive among the rising generation are among its best results or fruit .. While there is great necessity for informing people here, there is as much necessity that the true knowledge of their condition should widely spread among the Indian people themselves The co-ordination of both is necessary to evolve the required revolution – *whether it would be peaceful or violent*. The character of this revolution will *depend upon the wisdom or unwisdom* of the British Government and the action of the British people. [29]

If the Grand Old Man of India himself were to hold such opinions, we could only guess how much more the other leaders of the Congress and the national movement should have felt about this subject. It is now being revealed that Swami Vivekananda secretly yearned for the political emanicipation of India through revolution. Sister Nivedita, his confidant and successor, is said to have played a prominent part in the for-

mation of secret societies in Bengal and did not, perhaps, altogether discard terrorism as a method of political warfare But as far as Swami Vivekananda's role is concerned, it is indisputable that he had succeeded in mobilising the youth, especially of Bengal, with his call for a supreme self-sacrifice, at the altar of the Mother (land). Vivekananda's works were very much in use by the 'terrorists' and many copies of them were seized in police searches.[30] It is whispered that even the famous moderate leader, Sir Surendranath Banerji, was not averse to the cult of the bomb and Acharya P. C. Roy, a renowned chemist, even volunteered to train the revolutionaries in bomb-making.[31] That Tilak was the ideological inspiration behind the formation of some secret societies in Maharashtra, is now attested to by the memories of many revolutionaries. Lala Lajpat Rai is reported, in one of his public speeches, to have demanded the hot blood of youngmen to water the tree of the nation.[32] Bipin Chandra Pal regarded terrorism as the 'not unnatural outcome of the repressive measures of the government' and excused the terrorists as youthful idealists and suggested that the only remedy was the grant of Home Rule to India. Even Rabindranath Tagore is said to have placed his poetic genius at the disposal of the terrorists.[33]

We need not further dilate on this topic. We would only like to point towards the inherent self-contradiction in the attitudes taken by Mahatma Gandhi himself on various occassions. Soon after he led a successful satyagraha campaign in Gujarat, Mahatma Gandhi embarked on his famous (or notorious) recruiting campaign for the defence of the British Empire in World War I But he was very coolly received by the villagers who were not at all enthused with his exhortations to develop physical prowess only to lay it at the altar of British imperialism. The failure was so manifest that Gandhi himself remarked at one place:

> .. my influence, great as it may appear to outsiders, is strictly limited. I may have considerable influence to conduct a campaign for the redress of popular grievances because people are ready and need a helper.

> But I have no influence to direct people's energy into channels in which they have no interest.[34]

This can also explain why he, time and again, failed to direct the people into totally non-violent struggles. While this advocacy of satyagraha was avowedly with the intention of changing the opponent's heart by inflicting self-suffering, it is curious to hear thus from Subhas Chandra Bose:

> I would like to remind you that when Mahatma Gandhi commended his non-co-operation programme to the Indian nation at the annual session of the Congress at Nagpur in December, 1919, he said: "If India had the the sword today, she would have drawn the sword." and proceeding further with his argument, Mahatmaji then said that since armed revolution was out of question, the only other alternative before the country was that of non-co-operation or satyagraha. Since then times have changed and it is now possible for the Indian people to draw the sword.[35]

Thus we can point out many self-contradictions in Gandhi's policy. We may not totally agree with Mr. Langford James that Gandhi was only a shrewd politician and not a visionary at all,[36] but can admit this much that his saintly and humanitarian virtues not always helped him in formulating coherent political policies and his shrewd political sense was at times exercised at the expense of the former.

Anyway, Mahatma Gandhi was a saintly figure with many fads to his credit. It may seem very unkind on the part of Subhas Chandra Bose to remark that in a country like Russia or Germany or Italy, his doctrine of non-violence would have led him to the Cross or to the mental hospital.[37] But, in fact, there is nothing unkind or shocking in this appraisal By Max Weber's standards Gandhi, if he were to be treated as a revolutionary, would count as a charismatic revolutionary. Charisma is pre-rational, incompatible with social or intellectual order. Emotions are an interruption of, not the subject-matter of, rationality. Hence, Revolution

through charisma, which has its origins in emotion, though capable of disrupting traditional societies, may not be capable of producing a rational society.[38] This aspect has been amply recognised by Suhhas Bose also, who remarked that everything connected with Gandhi has marked him out as one of the eccentric Mahatmas of Old and has brought him nearer to his people[39] In contrast, the national revolutionaries and communists may be deemed rational revolutionaries as per Weber's classification, but it is the paradox of Indian history that these rational revolutionaries could not often act rationally and almost totally lacked the charisma which seems to be so essential in effecting revolutionary or basic transformations in a backward and tradition-bound country like India.

This is in nowise to under-estimate the role of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in the freedom struggle No doubt, theirs was the major current which embraced almost every nook and corner of India and inspired the people with the basic idea of independence in a simple manner intelligible to them. At the same time we cannot overstate their influence and importance too Their work was, in turn, based upon, and at every step promoted indirectly by, the glorious martyrdom and great self-sacrifices of countless revolutionaries who were ready to (and many of them did) give up everything of theirs cheerfully for the deliverance of their mother-land. This is only to counter

> ...some over-zealous votaries of non-violence in this country [who] have sought to mix up ethics and morality with revolutionary violence in certain particular historical situations. Regardless of the total dedication and the noblest motivation of the revolutionaries, these pseudo-patriots and pseudo-moralists have thereby sought to relegate these revolutionaries to the back-yard of history Such unhistorical and unethical attitude of mind of political opportunists and opportunistic historians must be denounced and rejected.

> Revolutionary violent action during the course of our struggle, regardless of its lapses and inadequacies, was an integral part of the national struggle and motivated by the highest ideals and a sense of total sacrifice for the cause. In fact, many of the armed revolutionaries, represented at their best by Subhas Chandra Bose, were more forthright and clear about the socio-economic aim of the Indian Revolution than most of the votaries of non-violence.[40]

We are of the opinion that, inspite of the heavy losses and damage suffered by the Brrtish economy and military set-up due to World War II, they would not have left India so soon but for the fear instilled in the r hearts about a possible (or probable?) military revolt and imminent mass revolution in India. This development was again due to the cumulative effect of the immense work and sacrifices of generations of revolutionaries coupled with the heroic struggles of the armed and unarmed masses. It is only to emphasize this point that we have ventured on this lengthy discussion. Our purpose here is only to do justice to the much neglected role of the revolutionaries and it is in no way to deny what credit the Gandhian, peaceful, current of the freedom struggle deserves.

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CHAPTER III

REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS TILL 1918: A REVIEW

British Rule in India was based on the physical strength of their sword coupled with the moral might of the rule of law. It is true the laws were often unjust and the sword was often ferocious. However, it has to be conceded that for the first time in the history of India, a powerful and modern ruling class with long traditions of democracy and 'equality before law' in their homeland did try to translate some of those principles into practice in their Indian possessions also, and achieved a fair amount of success in that effort. May be for their own selfish ends they did many things here, but the consequence was the rise of an English-educated and democratically oriented middle class in this country, which in the course of time began to advocate that the same principles of 'equality, fraternity and liberty' be applied in India also. The origins of the entire nationalist movement of India including the revolutionary and communist currents have to be traced to this phenomenon only. Many Englishmen might not have concurred with Macaulay when he prophesied :

> *The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with darkness.* It is difficult to form any conjectures as to the fate reserved for a State which resembles no other in history, and which forms by itself a seperate class of political phenomena; the laws which regulate its growth and its decay are still unknown to us. *It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our a system till it has outgrown the system, that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government, that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions*

> *Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or to retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history.* To have found a great people sunk to the lowest depths of slavery and superstition, to have so ruled them as to have made them desirous and capable of all the privileges of citizens, would indeed be a title to glory all our own. The sceptre may pass away from us. Unforeseen accidents may derange our most profound schemes of policy. Victory may be inconstant to our arms. But there are triumphs which are followed by no reverses. There is an empire exempt from all natural causes of decay. *Those triumphs are the pacific triumphs of reason over barbarism, that empire is the imperishable empire of our arts and our morals, our literature and our laws.*[1]

But realities inexorably moved in that direction and, educated in the English language, tradition and politics, imbued with Western cultural and libertarian values, the newly risen middle class of India had played the role of the vanguard in the national movement — in all its three currents.

No doubt the Revolt of 1857 was a great uprising against British high-handedness and atrocities and the Wahabi-Farzi movement of 1840-70 was a valiant struggle against the foreign rulers and for the establishment of a Muslim state in India; but it is quite doubtful whether they can be termed the real harbingers of the great national movement that shook India (and Britain) from the last decades of the 19th century to the midnight of that glorious (or fateful) day of August 14, 1947. There seems to be no discernible continuity of the traditions of the 1857 revolt and the Wahabi-Farzi movement carried into the struggles of 1885–1947. At the best, a clever and enlightened national leadership seems to have had used the above revolts for propaganda and agitational purposes long after the people had virtually forgotten about them. The contemporary opinions of the intelligentsia and the middle class towards these revolts were largely quite critical and

disapproving of them. It is only from the 1870's when the English educated Indian middle classes started to organise themselves into various associations and consciously strove to rise to an equal status with the Europeans in British India, can we find the seeds of 'nationalism' and liberalism taking firm roots in the country. The Indian National Congress founded in 1885 was, with all its limitations and its 'politics of mendicancy', the first coherent attempt by the middle classes to forge a sense of national unity and integration between the various peoples inhabiting the sub-continent. The consciousness that people should call themselves and recognise themselves as Indians first and Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Parsees or Tamils, Telugus, Marathis, Bengalis, Punjabis later, was a result of a slow and sustained educational process by the national leadership of the Congress and later of different organisations.

The first concious and violent revolt against the British rule which openly aimed for political independence in the modern sense was probably that abortive one led by the Maharashtrian Wasudev Balwant Phadke with his recruits from the tribal people like Ramoshis, Bhils and Kolis, in the districts of Ahmednagar, Nasik, Khandesh and Berar, who *readily accepted his plans because they were not unaccustomed to rebel against the forces of law.*[2] Here again it is doubtful whether the lofty idealism of the leader was shared by his followers and it is almost certain that the organisation was not wide-spread or well structured. However, it is quite remarkable that Phadke was defended by that undaunted 'Public Uncle', a founder of the reputed 'Sarvajanik Sabha' of Pune, who when asked, "Do you realise the consequences of what you are doing?" coolly replied: "What consequences are possible? The utmost that the government might do is to hang Ganesh Wasudev Joshi along with Wasudev Balwant Phadke. I know it." Phadke was, as expected, convicted; but the able advocacy of the 'Public Uncle' and some lawyers from Bombay saved him from the extreme punishment and he was sentenced to deportation. Phadke died as a prisoner in Aden in 1883.[3]

However, the real spirit of militant nationalism and, in consequence, of revolutionary terrorism seems to have had taken roots from the time the famous 'Ganapati' and 'Shivaji' Utsavas ware started by that indomitable nationalist leader, Lokamanya Bala Gangadhara Tilak, a Chitpavan Brahmin and resident of Pune. The Chitpavan Brahmins were till the second decade of the 19th century the ruling caste of Maharashtra from which the illustrious Peshwas claimed descent. Their government was overthrown by the British and later they were employed by the British in subordinate administration. But they were said to have nurtured a certain discontent and natural longing for a return to power and it is among these Chitpavan Brahmins of the Pune district that the first indications of a revolutionary movement are to be found. [4]

It is noteworthy that the militant nationalism as also the revolutionary terrorism of these earlier days was steeped in, and inseperable from, religious revivalism of the day, especially the Great Hindu religious awakening. This was but natural if we realise that secularism is only of recent origin (even in the enlightend West), and in a country where as much as 90% of the population is Hindu, the early rumblings of nationalism could not but be the echoes of Hindu religious revival and awakening. We have only to keep in mind that let alone the great Irish freedom struggle in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even the present day struggle of the Irish Republican Army in Ulster is predominantly Catholic in spirit and the most secular British established a tradition 'which continues to this day' that the king can never be a Catholic, and then we recognise there was nothing wrong in this development either. As Annie Besant once observed, and rightly so, "... all great movements in India are rooted in religion." [5] The new secularism, where religion is not of much relevance and is relegated to private affairs only, is quite modern in its origin and if we see the past with the developed concepts of today and find fault with a Tilak or Aurobindo for their efforts to instil a national consciousness in the minds of people through religious symbols and traditions, we will not be doing much service to rationality in historiography. So it

is not astonishing if the Ganapati festival originated as a direct response to the challenge posed by the Hindu-Muslim riots of Bombay in 1893, and pamphlets being distributed in the Utsavas urging Hindus to arms against a tyrannical foregin rule and also inflaming feelings against Muhammadans. [6]

The most generous young Indians of the days of 1840–1890 were reported, by the turn of the century, to have been inflamed with a bitter spirit of hostility towards the British Rule and Farquhar lists five main reasons for this transformation : 1. The fact that India is under foreign government ... (simply a thing which ought not to be) ; 2 The race-hatred and race-contempt exhibited by Europeans ; 3 Lord Curzon ; 4. the inner antagonism between Hindu and Western culture ; and 5. Exaggerated praise of the West. He continues:

> It is clear as noon-day that the religious aspect of anarchism was purely an extension of that revival of Hinduism which is the work of Dayananda, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and the Theosophists ... But you cannot sow the wind without reaping the whirlwind. If it be true that Hinduism and Indian civilisation are purely spiritual and good, and that Christianity and Western civilisation are grossly materialistic and corrupt, then the average Hindu was quite right in drawing the conclusions that the sooner India is rid of Europen influence the better ! We are already on the very verge of the doctrine of the anarchists ... in 1895 (Tilak) organized a great celebration of the birthday of Sivaji ... who ... made the Maratha tribes an Iron Army and a united nation to resist the Muhammadans ... This widespread commemoration ... in 1895 is significant, because in it for the first time all the features of the Extremist proganda stand out clear; and there is unquestionable proof that it contained the poison of anarchy; for within two years it worked itself out in murder in the streets of Poona. *For this reason we take 1895 as the date of the arrival of the new spirit in Indian history.* [7]

I fully concur with Farquhar as far as his date of the advent of the revolutionary spirit is concerned.

The murder referred to in the above quotation is that of Mr. Rand, Plague Commissioner, and of Lt. Ayerst, by the brothers Chapekar, Damodar and Balakrishna, on the night of 22 June, 1897, when those officers were returning home from a celebration of the 60th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Victoria in the city of Pune. They were said to have been inspired by the inflammatory articles of Tilak and infuriated by the unspeakable atrocities committed by Rand on all classes of men and women during the Plague control operations in the city. They were said to have formed a secret "Society for the removal of obstacles to the Hindu Religion", two years earlier in 1895 and intended to impart physical and military training to devoted Hindu youth. [8] The Chapekar brothers, caught after great difficulty, pleaded guilty to the charge of murder and declared that they did all this "in order to make the Aryan brethern rejoice, fill the British with sorrow and invite upon themselves the stamp of treason." They were hanged.[9] Later, in February 1899, the last surviving one of the Chapekar brothers, Vasudev Chapekar, along with another associate made an attempt on the life of a Chief Constable in Pune and afterwards murdered the two Dravid brothers who had been rewarded by the government for information which led to the arrest and conviction of Damodar Chapekar. These two were also caught, tried and hanged.[10] It is said to be unprecendented in the annals of the revolutionary movement in India that all three brothers of a family should court martyrdom in this fashion. [11]

Just a week before the Rand murder, prosecution for sedition against Bala Gangadhar Tilak for his publications of the *Kesari* was started. The position taken up by Tilak was described to be one of casuistical apology for political assassination. [12] Tilak was convicted to 18 months Rigorous Imprisonment. However, He was not charged with any conspiracy

to kill Rand. But evidence now available shows that the assassination was committed with his full knowledge and Balshastri Haridas goes to the extent of saying that within a few minutes of the killing, he was told in Marathi, 'Kam Jhale'—action is accomplished.[13] This is sufficient to indicate as to how far the early national leaders like Tilak could go to rouse national consciousness in the people and keep the spirit of defiance and struggle alive.

The Chapekar brothers' organization does not, however, seem to have been sufficiently sound and widespread, and their actions reflect more of vengefulness against certain atrocities by individual officers than a cold and calculated conspiracy to overthrow the existing government. This explains why with the above two actions and the hanging of the Chapekar brothers, Maharashtra ceased to be the ground of terrorism until at least another decade passed by.

Farquhar mentions Syamaji Krishna Verma and Bipin Chandra Pal as the other two important persons in India who contributed most to the spread of revolutionary terrorist (in his words 'anarchist') ideas in the country. It is noteworthy that Shyamaji Krishna Verma was a personal friend and pupil of Swami Dayananda, the renowned founder of Arya Samaj. He worked chiefly from abroad to stoke the flames of revolution in India. Bipin Chandra Pal is said to have filled the hearts of Indians with venom towards the British through his journal *New India*.[14]

Anyway, it was in Bengal in the early years of the twentieth century that the most fertile soil for revolutionary activities was to be found Since at least three decades before that the educated middle classes of India, especially the Bengali 'Bhadralok'[15] were very much chagrined with the British policy of discrimination in civil services and the racial superiority exhibited by the Europeans in India. Eminent Bengalis like Bankim Chandra Chatterji, Swami Vivekananda, Ramesh Chander Dutt, Aswini Kumar Dutt, Surendra Nath Banerji, were preaching the necessity of national regeneration and inculcating the spirit of self-respect, and self-sacrifice in

the youth of Bengal in various ways and manners. Their preachings and exhortations were in turn based on the socio-religious reform movements of the 18th and 19th centuries, many of which orginated from Bengal. The contemptuous attitude of the Britishers who denounced Indians as a 'nation of liars' (Curzon), and Bengalis as a 'race of cowards' (Macaulay) was deemed a serious blow to the self-respect of the Bengal Bhadraloks who were determined as never before that they were in no way to be deemed 'effeminate.' Several distinguished leaders exhorted the youth to develop physical prowess by regular physical exercises, lathi and sword play, etc , and also moral powers by the cultivation of the supreme virtues of self-sacrifice, public service, etc. Here lies the beginning of the establishment of various secret societies in Bengal.

In the latter half of the 1860's, Calcutta witnessed the establishment and celebration of the Hindu Mela, an annual festival, the main planks of which were Swadeshi, physical culture and the awakening of a sense of national unity to oppose British imperialism. The two leading figures of the Hindu Mela were Nandagopal Mitra and Rajnarayan Basu. It may be pertinent to mention here that Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Kumar Ghosh and Satyendranath Bose, who so prominently figure in the militant nationalist movement of 1905–08, were all lineal descendants of the great Rajnarayan Basu either by the paternal or maternal side.[16] Rajnarayan Basu is said to have advocated the formation of societies committed by oath to the use of force, wherever necessary, to break the backbone of the ruling authorities. By the mid-1870's the situation so developed that Bipin Chandra Pal wrote in his memoirs that the "Calcutta student community was honey-combed with secret organizations."[17] Anyhow these societes seemed to have had, until 1905–07, the main and relatively harmless purpose of developing the physical prowess of the youth, instilling religious nationalism and inculcating a spirit of social service in their hearts. Bengal had to wait until Maharashtra showed the path of revolutionary terrorism, but once on that road, it out-distanced every other

province of India and became the nerve-centre of revolutionary movement in India.

Aurobindo Ghosh who was unsuccessful in the I. C. S. examination due to his failure in the riding test, was then in Baroda posted as the second-in-command of the Gaekwad college, but spent most of his time dreaming and designing the country's freedom and the means of achieving it. Another Bengali gentleman, Jatindranath Bandhyopadhyay, was there employed as a personal body-guard of the Gaekwad himself, and his dreams and designs were similar to that of Aurobindo. The two, therefore, came naturally very close and used to hold frequent discussions.

> Towards the beginning of 1892, Sister Nivedita went to Baroda on an invitation from the Gaekwad. There she met Aurobindo and gave him up-to-date information in regard to the activities of the secret clubs and societies of Bengal in general and of Calcutta, in particular. She also seems to have requested him to go to Bengal to bring these scattered and separate groups into one well-knit organisation. It was about this time, either before Nivedita's Baroda visit or not very long after, that between Aurobindo and Jatindranath it was decided that the latter would resign his Baroda job and go to Calcutta to impart physical and military training which he had good knowledge and experience of, to the youth of Bengal, to establish clubs for the purpose and to build up a network of secret organizations. Armed with a letter of introduction to Srimati Sarala Ghoshal (later to be known as Sarala Devi Chaudhurani after marriage), daughter of Srimati Svarnakumari Devi and Janaki Nath Ghoshal, and hence a niece of Rabindranath, Jatindranath came to Calcutta.[18]

Jathindranath seems to have founded a physical culture club at Calcutta soon after his arrival and only some time after that he seems to have met Pramath Nath Mitra, an advocate and leader of the Anushilan Samiti started at the initative

of one Satish Chandra Basu The meeting between Jatin Banerji and P. Mitra was fruitful and they agreed to amalgamate their two clubs into one under the name Anushilan Samiti and on the *Dol Purnima* day, 19 Chaitra 1308 B S., i.e., on 24 March, 1902. the *Samiti* was formally inaugurated. P. Mitra was to be the President, Chitta Ranjan Das the Vice-President, and Satish Chandra Basu, the Secretary. At a certain later date Aurobindo was taken in as Second Vice-President, presumably after his visit to Calcutta in 1903–04 [19] During his visit to Bengal in 1903-04, Aurobindo is also said to have formed a 'Central Council of Five persons' to activate and strengthen the Anushilan Samiti as also to effect a co-ordination between the various secret societies of Bengal Sister Nivedita was said to be a member of this Council of Five Aurobindo was said to have been initiated into a secret revolutionary organization by one Thakur Saheb, a chosen follower of Tilak [20] This establishes the definite influence (as also the primacy) of the Marathi revolutionary movement in Bengal.

I have dwelt long on the formation of the Anushilan samiti because it was destined to play the role of the premier revolutionary organization in Bengal for many years to come. From the above account it is not clear as to what exactly was the position of Jatin Banerji (later Niralamba Swami), but it is undisputed that he was the moving spirit behind the organization, the prime organiser and a most selfless soul who effaced himself to bring credit to Aurobindo and his not so illustrious brother Barindra Kumar Ghosh. Here we should also note that Barindra Kumar Gosh after due initiation in to the secret group by his brother, was sent to Calcutta round about October, 1902, to work for the Samiti. He worked for two years going round many districts with the zeal of a new convert and returned disappointed to Baroda having fallen out with Jatindranath Banerji who was a strict disciplinarian. He also heaped unfounded and calumnious charges against Jatindranath and when his mischief was out, the charges being found baseless, Aurobindo himself had to call him back to Baroda. That he was sent again in 1905-1906, when the Swadeshi movement in consequence of the ill-advised partition of Bengal

was at its height, and contributed to the final split of the Anushilan Samiti, we will learn about later. Anyhow, Jatindranath Banerji became disillusioned and left the revolutionary career altogether towards the end of 1904, to become a *sannyasin* but not before he toured widely over many parts of Bengal along with P. Mitra and Barindra Kumar Ghosh spreading the message of revolution and freedom and organizing secret societies, clubs and study circles.[21] This Jyotindranath Banerji is regarded as the real pioneer of the revolutionary movement in Bengal and was called by Jadu Gopal Mukerjee (the greatest leader of Juganthar after Bagha Jatin) as the *Brahma* of the revolutionary movement. He is said to have gone to Punjab after his *sannyasa* and as Swami Niralamba is said to have very much influenced the famous Sardar Ajit Singh and also Sirdar Kishan Singh (the paternal uncle and father respectively, of Sirdar Bhagat Singh).[22]

We have learnt of the existence of some secret societies in Bengal even before the Anushilan Samiti. The *Sanjibani Sabha* of which Rajnarayan Bose was the President, merits special mention in this regard. At around the same time (1876), one reads of the existence of another secret organisation initiated by Sivanath Sastri with Bipin Chandra Pal, Sundari Mohan Das and others.[23] These organisations of the Seventies were said to be without any revolutionary motive or any plan of secret assassination as the way to national emanicipation, and their thought and imagination alone were of a revolutionary character. They came into existence at a juncture when British liberalism was passing into arrogant imperialism from about the time of Lord Lyttoon's viceroyalty in India, and the one most important effect of these societies was that they introduced a tradition into Bengal by which thenceforth secret societies came to be regarded as natural and a revolutionary temper was being created. Students and youth were the real force and basis of this movement. While vows and rituals associated with Hinduism marked the initiation into some of these societies, Mazzini and 'Young Italy', the anti-Czarist secret organisations, as well as the American war of Independence, were their real political inspiration. But

as yet the secret societies of Calcutta had no idea of direct action, nor felt any need of it.[24] The same may be said of the Athmonnati Samiti founded in 1897. Some other secret societies contemporaneous to Anushilan and worth mentioning are: the Suhrid Samiti of Mymensingh which was said to be non-political before the visit of Miss Sarala Devi Ghosal, its patroness, in April, 1905, but after her visit developed into a dangerous centre;[25] the Sadhana Samiti of Mymensingh; the Brati Samiti of Faridpur and the Swadesh Bandhab Samiti of Bakargunj (Barisal) which acquired something like a genuine mass base – 175 village branches reported in 1909, and through sustained humanitarian work of its leader Aswini Kumar Dutt acquired remarkable popularity among the Muslim as well as Hindu peasants.[26] All these were declared unlawful along with the Dacca Anushilan Samiti, in January, 1909. It is notable that apart from the Calcutta societies, the main strength of the revolutionary movement was in East Bengal and was confined largely to the Hindu minority there. The afore-mentioned Miss Sarala Devi Ghosal founded in 1903, an Academy at Balleygunj, Calcutta, to impart training in fencing and Jiu-Jitsu and other physical exercises to the Bengali youth with the declared intention of removing the historical reproach perpetuated by Macaulay, that the Bengalis were a race of cowards. Her connection with the Dacca Anushilan Samiti was not direct, but its head, Pulin Behari Das, had been a pupil of her fencing master *Murtaza*. She was the initiator also of the celebrations in Mymensingh of the Pratapaditya Utsava in imitation of the Shivaji Utsava of Maharshtra.[27]

Be that as it may, all the activities of all the secret societies in Bengal were limited to physical and moral training and social services, and were far from any definite contemplation of the use of force when two events of utmost importance delivered the necessary shock and gave the required impetus to pull them onto the definite path of revolutionary terrorism. They are: 1. The historic victory of a small Asian nation—Japan, against the mighty European power Russia, and 2. the ill-fated partition of Bengal and the consequent earth-

shaking Swadeshi movement in Bengal. The former created great enthusiasm and inspired very much the Bengali youth (as also the youth of other parts in India to a lesser degree) who began to ask themselves: "If a small nation like Japan could shatter the myth of European superiority and defeat the much-dreaded Russian Army, why not we dare to liberate our country?" The latter event was of the most immediate concern to all ranks of Bengali society (except for fanatic and misguided sections of Muslims), and posed a life and death problem. The Bengalis rose to the occasion like one man and demostrated the invincible might of united struggle and determined passive resistance to the whole of India, so much so, that the majestic Brit'sh Emperor was compelled to unsettle the 'settled fact' in 1912. But here we are concerned with its immediate impact.

The ruthless repression let loose on the swadeshi activists and the indiscriminate and bestial lathi-charge on revered leaders and the banning of the public singing of *Vande Matharam*—the nat'onal song supreme, by the autocratic rulers, and the inst'gation of attacks by Muslims on Hindus to divide the ranks of the people — all so inflamed the militant youth of Bengal that they provided the most fertile ground for a flare-up of revolutionary terrorism in 1907–1908.

Here we will take a step back in time and deal with the formation of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti, the split between Anushilan and Juganthar, and the ideological and intellectual inspiration behind these secret societies. The Anushilan Samiti, Calcutta, lost in its formative period an able leader, a good organiser and a skilful revolutionary trainer in Jatindra Nath Banerji when he was reported to have been expelled by Aurobindo Ghosh from the Anushilan Samithi inspite of the wish of the President, P. Mitra, to the contrary (!) and due to the wily machinations of Barindra Kumar Ghosh. This Barindra Kumar Ghosh was also the main spirit behind the starting of 'Juganthar', a Bengali weekly in March, 1906, to preach revolutionary politics publicly. This was also against the declared opinions of the president P. Mitra, and it effected a virtual

split in the Anushilan Samiti. Since the publication of Juganthar, the contact of Barin and his associates (Bhupendra Nath Dutta, Abinash Bhattacharya, etc.) with the Samiti tended to be very tenuous, and they followed a revolutionary line independent of the *Samiti*. From all accounts it has been established beyond doubt that Barin and his associates were instrumental in introducing the cult of the bomb and gun in the revolutionary politics of Bengal. In the middle of the first decade of the present century, Pramath Nath Mitra seemed not prepared to accept the cult of violence replacing the cult of lathi. [28]

Then to come to the formation of the Dacca Anushilan Samiti – it took place some time in December, 1905, when Pramath Nath Mitra along with Bipin Chandra Pal undertook a tour of East Bengal. P. Mitra seized the opportunity to form a branch of the Anushilan Samiti at Dacca and after much hesitation appointed Pulin Behari Das, an innocent-looking youngman, well-trained in lathi-play, as *Parichalak* (supervisor) and Ananda Chakravarthy, a pleader, as *Adhinayak* (commander), of the newly founded *Samiti*. The initiation of Pulin Behari and the formation of a branch of Anushilan Samiti at Dacca, were momentous acts of Mitra having far-reaching impact on the revolutionary political movement in India. [29] Pulin Das was a very dedicated and capable organizer and within a few years organized as many as 600 branches all over East Bengal, with as many as 1000 members in the Dacca town and between 20,000 and 30,000 members in various districts of East Bengal. [30] In fact, since the formation of the Anushilan Samiti at Dacca and the initiation of Pulin Behari Das, the original *Samiti* existed in name only. It was the *Samiti* of Dacca which not only upheld the revolutionary banner but also emerged as a full-fledged political party with a network of six hundred branches. Eventually, the leaders of the Dacca *Samiti* became the real leaders of the parent body. [31]

The ideological inspiration for the national revolutionaries was mainly that of Hindu religious nationalism as

explained in the teachings of Swami Vivekananda and the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Bankim Babu's *Anand Math* and the glorious song of *Vande Matharam* in it were a source of perpetual inspiration for all national revolutionaries. The 'song celestial' – the Bhagavad Gita with its insistence on disinterested action was another eternal source of inspiration. A few other books like the *'Jaliyat Clive'* (Clive the cheater), the Life of Maharaja Nanda Kumar, the Life of Rana Pratap Singh, *Sikher Balidan* (Martyrdom of the Sikhs), *Chandi, Bartman Rananiti,* and *Mukti Kon Pathe* (Whither Liberation?) – a collection of important articles published in Juganthar, had also a profound impact on the youth and students. Personifying the organic link between the Marathi and Bengali revolutionary currents was Sakharam Ganesh Deuskar (1869–1912), whose *Desher Katha* (the story of the country) and *Shivaji Diksha* in Bengali, had greatly roused the people and also helped very much to remove the deeply ingrained misunderstandings and antipathies in the minds of Bengalis towards the Marathi national struggle under Shivaji. These misunderstandings, etc , were due to the depredations of the later Marathas under the Peshwas, in Bengal. A conscious effort was made by many extremist nationalist leaders of Bengal like B.C. Pal, Rabindra Nath Tagore, as also by Tilak and Khaparde, to introduce the Shivaji festivals into Bengal in a big way; however, they did not meet with much success. But they did succeed in allaying from the minds of Bengali natioalists, misapprehensions regarding Shivaji and creating a deep sense of admiration and respect towards him.

The national revolutionaries took the example of Shivaji more seriously.

> To the terrorists, Shivaji was no doubt, the embodiment of liberty and freedom. But his special appeal to them was that of his armed uprising aganist the enemy of freedom. The secret societies and samitis were, perhaps, paying great tributes to their chivalrous herd Shivaji by imitating his method of organising youngmen for building up an army of devoted freedom fighters.[32]

Another electrifying literary piece which needs special mention is the pamphlet *Bhawani Mandir*, probably written by Aurobindo Ghosh. This pamphlet, in loud terms, preached the cult of *Shakti*, held up Modern Japan as the most glorious example of a marvellous and sudden upsurging of strength in a nation, stressed that India's greatest need was one of spiritual regeneration, and that religion was the path natural to national mind. It advocated the building of *Ashramas* (a sort of monastic retreat) for the teaching of revolutionary nationlism, and of the temples of the Mother (Bhawanī mandir), which were to be the true sources of strength to the nation. It emphasized the need of Bhakti, Karma and Jnana Yogas, laying immediate stress on the Karma Yoga or the Cult of Action exhorting to establish a new order of Brahmacharins (celibates) to carry out revolutionary work. This coupled with the all-pervading influence of 'Anand Math' electrified every section of the revolutionaries in Bengal. Especially the latter's impact was so great that

> the special vow taken by the members of the *Anushilan Samithi* of Dacca was practically the same as that imposed uoon the *'children'* (santans) ...the greeting 'Bande Matharam' became the war-cry of the extremist party in Bengal.[33]

Apart from these books, many news-papers and journals in Bengal also contributed to the propaganda of the cult of revolutionary violence. The *Sandhya* edited by Brahmo Bhandhab Upadhyaya was reported to be extremely seditious and fanatical, and in August 1907, the first prosecution against the daily was launched. The Editor died while the case was pending and the case was withdrawn after considering the regrets expressed by the printer and the publisher of the paper. But the later issues of the daily were also in the same vein and after some further prosecutions the press in which the daily was printed was declared forfeit on 21 June, 1909, thus putting an end to the life of the newspaper. The *Bande Mataram*, an English daily started by Aurobindo Ghosh and some other friends in November, 1906, also suffered many prosecutions due to its extremist propaganda. The same may

be said of *Karma Yogin,* a weekly edited by Aurobindo Ghosh, *Suprabhat,* a Bengali monthly, and the *Sanjibani* newspaper also stoked the flames of extremism. But the pride of place should go to *Juganthar* started in 1906 by Barindra Kumar Gosh, Abinash Chandra Bhattacharjee and Bhupendra Nath Dutt (brother of Swami Vivekananda), which was remarked to be the foremost and most pernicious of the revolutionary papers [34] Its impact on the rapid spread of the revolutionary idea in Bengal was tremendous and it openly gave a call to the people to "rise in war or revolution" against the foreign rule, "... if even fifty millions of men disappeared from India in an attempt at deliverance." [35] No need saying that this weekly was also suppressed after several prosecutions.

The most practical significance of the 'Juganthar' was the development of a dedicated group of revolutionaries around it who believed in the cult of violence. Barindra Kumar Ghosh, Ullaskar Dutta, Bhupendranath Dutt, etc., were the actual leaders and organisers, while Aurobindo stood as a sort of ideological, theoretical and perhaps organisational guide. The Juganthar group planned many daring actions, of which the attempts to blow up the Lt. Governor's train are specially remarkable. In the last of such attempts, on December 6, 1907, the train in which he was travelling was actually derailed by a bomb near Midnapore, but with no damage done to any lives. But the most remarkable action was that of the bomb-throwing into a carriage in Muzaffarpur on the night of 30 April, 1908, which killed two ladies, Mrs & Miss Kennedy instantaneously. It was, indeed, intended for the Judge of Muzaffarpur, Mr. Kingsford, who earned notoriety among the nationalist sections for his ruthless judgements. But Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki, the two assailants, mistook the carriage coming from Kingsford's house to be carrying him, and their action instead killed the two innocent ladies. Prafulla Chaki shot himself dead when apprehended by the police but Khudiram, the revolutionary in early teens, who was arrested, confessed in the court and was hanged. [36] It is now established beyond doubt that Khudiram sang under police torture after his arrest and this led two days

later (i. e., on May 2, 1908) to a search in Muraripukur garden at Maniktola and elsewhere, which resulted in the seizure of many bombs, dynamites, cartridges, and much correspondence.

Upon this 34 persons were charged with conspiracy, of whom one, Narendra Gosain, became an approver. Fifteen were ultimately found guilty of conspiracy to wage war against the King-Emperor—including Barindra Kumar Ghosh, already mentioned as one of the most active founders of the criminal revolutionary movement in Bengal, Hem Chandra Das, the manufacturer of the bomb which killed Mrs. and Miss Kennedy, and another who made the statement already alluded to and so strikingly confirmed as to the sending of a bomb in a parcel to Mr. Kingsford The trial in this cace is known as the Alipore conspiracy case. It is convenient to mention by anticipation that, pending the trial, the approver Narendra Gosain was shot dead in jail by two revolutionaries also confined, who managed to get arms smuggled in. They were both convicted and executed. Further, on 10th February, 1909, the Public Prosecutor who had acted in the Alipore case and in the case of the murder of the approver was shot dead in Calcutta, while on the 24th January 1910, a Deputy Superintendent of Police was shot dead while leaving the High Court, Calcutta, where he was attending the hearing of the appeal in the Alipore case.

The arrests made in the beginning of May 1908 in connection with the Alipore conspiracy for a time, removed from the scene between 30 and 40 persons, twelve of whom as shown by their convictions and ultimate sentences in that case were leaders in outrage.[87]

Here, it cannot but be pointed out that Barindra Kumar Ghosh who was supposed to be the leader of the conspiracy displayed a very shameful and vacillating behaviour.

Immediately after his arrest, he declared "My mission is over," and has given confessional statements to the police and to the Magistrate, and tried to cover up his cowardice under bombastic phrases as to the need for propaganda through courts. His jail life in the Andamans later, and his avowedly anti-revolutionary conduct after his release, only show how petty bourgeois impetuosity and irresponsible behaviour can ruin an otherwise potentially successful revolutionary movement. Anyway, there is no doubt that at that time,

> Universal sympathy [was] felt for the revolutionaries. The accused in the Alipore conspiracy case were regarded as martyrs to the country; and those like Prafulla Chaki and Khudiram, who had lost their lives, became heroes of folk songs sung all over the country... ... when Kanailal Datta (one of the killers of the approver Naren Gosain) was hanged ... ... his dead body was carried in a funeral procession which kings and conquering heroes well might envy. Calcutta was in tears, and thousands behaved as if they belonged to Kanai's family A dense crowd, bare-footed and tears in eyes, thronged the street and followed the bier, which was covered with heaps of flowers and *laja* (fried paddy) thrown by the weeping women from the balconies of the houses on the two sides of the narrow Kalighat Road. The place of cremation was a sea of human heads. Hundreds, probably thousands, fasted the whole day and night. The government was so much unnerved at this spontaneous demonstration (witnessed by the author of this book), that they never, in future, allowed the dead of revolutionaries to be carried in public. Indeed it may be said that Barin and his associates not only made the cult of the bomb popular, but also gave it a honoured place in the struggle for freedom. [38]

It is also said that there were no ashes of Kanai left to be immersed in river waters since, thousands of people virtually seized the ashes to the last pinch and even paper packets

were filled to be sent to the admirers in the mofussil districts.[39]

The Dacca Anushilan Samiti, in the period 1906-10, seems to have mainly concentrated on political dacoities in order to secure funds for the party, and at times on the assassination of individual police officers and traitors to the party. In November, 1908, Pulin Behari Das with eight other important national leaders was deported under Regulation III of 1918, and five secret societies including the Dacca Anushilan Samiti were proscribed in January, 1909.[40] The Howrah Conspiracy case launched in March, 1910, and the Dacca Conspiracy case instituted in July, 1910, dealt heavy blows to the Juganthar and the Anushilan organizations, respectively. In fact it seems that the Government first used the term 'Juganthar' to designate a group of terrorists under the leadership of Jatindra Nath Mukerji, who were brought to trial in the afore-mentioned Howrah conspiracy case. But the Juganthar as such, as a distinct group, was said to have not come into being until late 1914, or early 1915. This would mean that it was only in connection with the activities during World War I, that Juganthar emerged as a distinct group.[41]

After the conviction of Pulin Behari Das for seven years, and Ashuthoshdas Gupta and Jyothirmoy Roy for six years transportation, the Anushilan Samiti was considerably weakened. But still the revolutionary activities like dacoities, assassinations of police officers and informers continued with the Sonarang National School in East Bengal as the primary centre. On 11 December, 1911, the 'settled fact' was unsettled by a Royal Proclamation annuling the partition of Bengal. After this, Makhanlal Sen, the then leader of the Anushilan Samiti, pleaded for its dissolution on the ground that since their objective of re-unification of Bengal was achieved, there was no longer any need for the continuance of the Samiti as a secret society. He proposed to convert it to a social service organisation and even contacted the Ramakrishna Mission for that purpose. But the overwhelming majority of the leaders and cadres opposed this move. Upon this, Makhanlal Sen agreed to retire voluntarily from the organization. The Samiti

head-quarters was then shifted from the Sonarang School to Calcutta and a group of young workers in the age-group between 18 and 24 years who had no higher education, affluence, experience and high social standing, ably kept up and promoted the organization with great determination, devotion, courage and confidence. They were Narendra Mohan Sen, Trilokyanath Chakrovarthy, Rabi sen, Ramesh Acharya, Pratul Ganguli and Amritlal Hazra. In around 1912, the Anushilan Samiti and the Chandernagore group of revolutionaries consisting of Motilal Roy, Rash Behari Bose and Srish Chandra Ghosh, etc., became amalgamated into one organization,[42] and by the middle of 1913, the powerful Benares group under Sachindranath Sanyal also merged with the Samiti.

> In this way our Party extended its field of activity from East Bengal up to the Punjab and began to function as one unified Party ... the revolutionaries of Lahore, Delhi, Benares, Chandernagore and Dacca became fully united as one party.[43]

This development had thrown to the forefront, that titan of a revolutionary, Rash Behari Bose, who so ably planned for a general armed insurrection in the country in February, 1915. But more of this later.

Now we should again go back to Maharashtra and review, in brief, the activities of revolutionaries there. After the martyrdom of the Chapekar brothers, we find another Chitpavan Brahmin, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, receiving his early spiritual and political training in the Mitra Mela, started about 1899, in connection with the Ganapathi celebrations in Nasik – The elder brother of V. D Savarkar was said to have supervised the teaching of drill, physical exercises and fencing to the members in Nasik. V. D. Savarkar had also founded a revolutionary association named *Abhinav Bharat,* in 1904. Some accounts describe as if *Mitra Mela* itself was changed to *Abhinav Bharat.* Many noted figures of our freedom struggle like Acharya Kripalani, B. G. Kher, etc. were also said to be at one time, members in this secret society. A Pune weekly *Viheri* became the mouthpiece of Abhinav Bharat.[44]

Anyway, V. D. Savarkar left India for Britain in June, 1906, having received the Shivaji scholarship offered by S. R. Rana through the India House, London. Here a short account of Shyamaji Krishna Varma, the founder of the India House in London, will be quite useful.

Shyamaji Krishna Varma, a native of Kathiawar in Western India, went from Bombay to London for reasons as he stated in a paper subsequently published by him, not unconnected with the arrests which were made in connection with the Rand murder. Krishna Varma for some time lived in obscurity, but in January, 1905, he started in London, the Indian Home Rule Society, appointed himself President, and issued the first number of the *Indian Sociologist,* a penny monthly, as the organ of his society. In that paper he describes the society as having the object of securing Home Rule for India and carrying on a genuine India propaganda in England by all practicable means In December, 1905, Krishna Varma announced that he proposed to establish six lectureships of Rs. 1,000 each, for enabling authors, journalists and other qualified Indians to visit Europe, America and other parts of the world beyond the limits of India, so as to equip themselves efficiently for the work of spreading among the people of India a knowledge of freedom and national unity. He also published a letter from S. R. Rana of Paris (another Indian), who offered three travelling scholarships of Rs. 2,000, to be called after Rana Pratap S ngh, Shivaji, and some distinguished Muhammadan ruler. [45]

Savarkar reached London in July, 1906, and took his lodgings in the India House. Shyamaji Krishna Varma was said to have been very much impressed by Savarkar's dedication and when Savarkar started a Free India Society in India House, ostensibly as front organisation for recruiting members for Abhinav Bharat, Shyamaji is said to have had knowingly joined the society. [46] In the years 1906 & 1907, the India House became

> ... notorious as a centre of sedition and in July 1907 a question was put in the House of Commons inquiring

whether Government proposed to take any action against Krishnavarma. Soon after and probably in consequence of this inquiry he left for Paris and took up his residence there. In Paris he continued the campaign of sedition with a freer hand but still had his paper, the *Indian Sociologist*, printed in England. The printer was prosecuted and convicted in July 1909. The printing was then taken up by another person who was prosecuted and convicted in September, 1909 ... After that the paper was printed in Paris. Krishnavarma continued to keep in touch with the India House and controlled the work done there through S. R. Rana of Paris, who frequently visited London for the purpose.[47]

In London, Savarkar actively organized the Abhinav Bharat and the youngmen of India House got in touch with Irish, Turkish, and Russian revolutionaries, learning from them the technique of revolutionary organizing, as well as the handling of arms and ammunition. They tried secretly to make bombs in the backrooms of the India House Pistols were purchased in Britain and abroad. The firearms as well as the bomb manual were smuggled into India packed inside bulky books and in the false bottom of boxes. Senapati Bapat and Hemachandra Das were sent to Paris to learn the art of manufacturing bombs from a Russian nihilist revolutionary there. They learnt at first hand and brought a Bomb Manual from him which was cyclostyled, and Bapat, Hotilal Varma and Hemachandra Das reached India and distributed copies of it to important revolutionary centres in the country. Then followed the memorable event of the year – the Muzaffarpur bomb raid on April 30, 1908.[48]

Back in India, Tilak was sentenced to 6 years transportation on July 22, 1908 (on the eve of his 53rd birthday, the convicting Judge having passed this 'light' sentence entirely on the strength of the verdict of the European members of the jury), in a sedition case in connection with two articles in the *Kesari* published in May and June, 1908.

In those articles, he supported political assassinations in the wake of the Muzaffarpur bomb raid in which Khudiram Bose was being tried (and subsequently hanged), thus:

> Neither the Chapekars nor the Bengali bomb-throwers committed murders for retaliating the oppression practiced on themselves .. Considering the matter from the point of view of daring and skilled execution the Chapekar brothers take a higher rank ... considering the ends and the means the Bengalis must be given the greater commendation ... Owing to the bomb the attention of the government is attracted towards the disorder which prevails owing to the pride of military strength. [49]

Another editor, Paranjpe, was convicted on 8 July, 1908, in the Bombay High Court, of seditious libel in his paper, the *Kal,* for an article relating to the Muzaffarpur murders, 'couched in the same tone of apology for, if not approval of, the crime' which characterized the two articles in the *Kesari.* [50]

Here we should note a quite significant development of the day. The deep discontent evoked by the arrest of Tilak and his imprisonment, burst forth in organized strikes, hartals and demonstrations at various places all over the country. But the first ever political general strike of the working class of Bombay, and a hartal of the masses for about one week after Tilak's conviction, resulting in clashes with the armed European police in the city and consequent police firings in which as many as 200 people were said to have lost their lives, is of epochal significance. [51] Lenin was quick to recognise this and in the *Proletary* of 23 July, 1908, commented thus:

> In India the proletariat is beginning to stand up for its writers and political workers. The infamous sentence pronounced by the British Jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak – He was sentenced to a long term of transportation – This revenge against a

democrat by the lackeys of the moneybags led to street demonstrations and strike in Bombay. [52]

There in London, the activities of Savarkar and his associates were intensifying day by day, and this was in no small way due to the aid, financial and otherwise, rendered by a small but active group of revolutionaries in Paris consisting of Madame Bhikaji Rustom Cama, S R. Rana, Shyamaji Krishna Varma and (later) Virendranath Chattopadhyaya. The *Indian Sociologist* of Shyamaji Krishna Varma, referred to above, was breathing fire and blood in its lines and providing great inspiration and guidance to revolutionaries. Apart from this, the *Vande Mataram* from Geneva, edited by Madame Cama, and the *Talvar* from Berlin edited (at a later time) by Chatto (padhyaya), also deserve special mention in this regard. Madame Cama seems to be the most intrepid and capable person among this group. After Savarkar was arrested and sent to India, she seems to have gone to the British Consul in Paris and owned up the responsibility for the smuggling of 20 browning pistols and the Bomb Manual to India, lest that be used as a means to implicate Krishna Varma and S. R. Rana in criminal cases. Also, it is quite noteworthy that Madame Cama and Sirdar Singh Rana represented the first ever Indian delegation to the Socialist International at the twefth session of the International Socialist Congress which took place at Stuttgart, in 1907, and which Lenin also attended as a member of the Russian delegation. Virendranath Chattopadhyay, the elder brother of Sarojini Naidu, also attended the Congress along with the above two, as an observer. The minutes of the Congress make inspiring reading :

> On behalf of the Indian delegation, Madame Cama was appointed spokesman. She was wearing a sari and holding aloft a flag of Indian freedom prepared by herself—a tricolour flag of red, white and green. On white portion was written in Devangari script: *Vande Mataram* and on the green portion was drawn a sickle shaped moon and stars. Madame Cama moved the following resolution :

> That the continuance of British rule in India is positively disastrous and extremely injurious to the best interest of India and lovers of freedom of all over the world ought to cooperate in freeing from slavery the fifth of the whole human race inhabiting that oppressed country — since the perfect social state demands that no people would be subject to any despotic or tyrannical form of government [54]

The minutes also record that Madame Cama's fiery speech in support of the resolution visibly moved the delegates. She was warmly supported by such outstanding leaders of the international socialist movement as Jean Jaures of France, Hyndman of the U K., and Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg from Germany. The main opposition came from the notorious pseudo-socialist, Ramsay Macdonald. On technical grounds the motion could not be put to vote, but the president of the session, the veteran August Bebel, put it on record that the Congress endorsed the spirit of the resolution. [55]

In May, 1907, the fiftieth anniversary of the 1857 revolt was celebrated at the India House, London, in which a leaflet entitled "On Martyrs" glorifying the heroic deeds of the 1857 rebel leaders, was circulated. Savarkar used to read passages from his book on the First Indian War of Independence, still in manuscript, at the regular Sunday meetings at the India House. On 9 June, 1909, Ganesh Savarkar was convicted and sentenced at Nasik to transportation u/s 121 of the I.P C. for a series of inflammatory verses published by him early in 1906, under the title "Laghu Abhinav Bharat Mela." A cable message was at once sent from Nasik to Vinayak Savarkar, telling him of his brother's sentence. At the usual Sunday meeting of the India House on 20 June, 1908, Vinayak Savarkar was especially violent and repeated his oath to wreak his vengeance on the English. It is curious to note that with in a few days, on 1 July, 1909, Sir William Curzon Wyllie, political aide-de-camp at the India office, was assassinated by one Madan Lal Dhingra, at a

gathering at the Imperial Institute in London. A Parsee doctor, Cowasji Lalcaca, who rushed to protect Wyllie by grappling with the assailant, was also shot and died on the way to hospital. Immediately after shooting Wyllie, Madan Lal tried to shoot himself also, but while turning the revolver to his side, he released the safety catch unconsciously and was consequently unable to shoot [56] Madan Lal was a man of great grit and he cheerfully courted martyrdom by ascending the gallows on August 17, 1909. The execution of such a noble patriot like Madan Lal Dhingra had evoked much sympathy and admiration everywhere. Irish papers printed huge placards saying "Ireland honours Mr. Dhingra who was proud to lay down his life for the sake of his country." The English author W S. Blunt in his book "My Diaries" (part II, p. 288), mentions that Lloyd George told Winston Churchill that Dhingra was a great patriot; Churchill agreed and added that Dhingra's last words were among the finest ever made in the name of patriotism. [57] After the Wyllie assassination, India House was temporarily closed, Savarkar was slapped by an Englishman at a condolence meeting held in honour of Wyllie by the resident Indian community of London, and things became too hot in London for the revolutionaries.

Within a few months of this Dhingra episode, the District Magistrate of Nasik, Mr. Jackson, said to be a very popular officer widely known for his sympathy and knowledge of Hindu custom and sentiment, and whose duty it had been to commit Mr. Ganesh Savarkar for trial, was shot dead. On the 21st of December, 1909, Ananta Kanhere, a chitpavan brahmin youth from Aurangabad shot dead A. M. T Jackson at a farewell party given in his honour in Nasik, with one of the browning pistols which had been sent out by Vinayak Savarkar At once vigorous investigation followed and a Nasik conspiracy case in addition to the case for the murder of Mr Jackson, was instituted For the murder of Mr. Jackson seven men, all chitpavan brahmins, were brought to justice and three of them were executed. For what is known as the Nasik conspiracy, 38 men, all but one of whom were brahmins and

most of whom were chitpavans, were put on their trial, 27 of them were found guilty and sentenced to imprisonment. The evidence in the trial showed that the Mitra Mela at Nasik had, before the departure of Vinayak Savarkar, developed into the Abhinav Bharat or Young India Society, a title probably suggested by the Young Italy of Mazzini. Its objects were undoubtedly revolutionary. That Association modelled on the organisation of revolutionary societies in Russia and the Marathi translation by V. Savarkar of 'the life of Mazzini' with his introduction summarising Mazzini's political teachings, sent from England and printed in Pune, was said to be of tremendous ideological importance to the growth of the society. Parallels were drawn with Mazzini of that famous Sant Ram Das, the Guru of Shivaji, and the necessity of formation of secret societies and resort to armed struggle was emphasized. The evidence also disclosed details about the activities of India House group in London and their organic connection with, and secret aid to, the revolutionaries in India. The politics of assassination was preached and justified on the plea that the initial stage of revolution needs such a policy. [58]

Just a month before Jackson's murder, two coconut bombs were thrown on the Carriage in which Viceroy Lord Minto and Lady Minto were proceeding through the main roads of Ahmedabad. But they did not explode. One of the bombs exploded after some time blowing off the hand of its finder. Vinayak's younger brother Narayan Savarkar, was implicated in this case. The Nasik conspiracy case also led to the institution of another Gwalior conspiracy case in which several accused, mainly brahmins, were found guilty and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment [59]

These developments very much convulsed Vinayak Savarkar and his health broke down. Moreover, the police were shadowing him every moment in London. Savarkar was implored by the executive committee of Abhinav Bharat Society in London, to leave for the safe resort of Paris and he obliged. Shyamaji Krishna Varma and Madame Cama welcomed him

with open arms. But after some days, Savarkar grew restless and decided to go back to London to arrange for the defence of his colleagues in the Nasik conspiracy case. In his anxiety he disregarded the caution of Shyamaji not to go back to London, and was promptly arrested as soon as he alighted at the Victoria Railway Station of London, under a warrant issued under the Fugitive Offenders Act. On July 1st., he was put on board the ship P & O, S. S. Morea, and when the ship arrived at Marsielles and anchored there, made a daring escape bid from the ship. This incident created much clamour in French political circles later, because when Savarkar succeeded in reaching the French shores, a French policeman who caught him on the French soil allowed the British guards to drag him away back to the ship. The French Government was forced to contest this arrest of Savarkar on the French soil by the British guards in the International Court of Justice at Hague Despite the best efforts of Madame Cama, Shyamaji Krishna Varma and others, the verdict was in favour of Britain only. This was largely due to the callousness of the French government in this matter.[60] Savarkar, brought back to India, was sentenced to transportation for life in the Nasik conspiracy case.

The arrest of Savarkar and the Nasik and Gwalior conspiracy cases, broke the back of the Abhinav Bharat Society at home and also abroad. Since that time we find Western India largely free from any revolutionary activities. World War I was looming large on the horizons by 1910–11, and the Indian revolutionaries in France gradually shifted their centre to Geneva and Berlin. Savarkar's right-hand man, V. V S. Aiyar, returned to India and began to work from the safe asylum of French Pondicherry. He was the brain behind the Ashe murder in Tinnevelly. One Vanchi Iyer, a clerk in the Travancore State Forest department and a member of a revolutionary group led by one Nilakanta Brahmachari who incidentally did not believe in terrorism at all, was somehow indoctrinated by V. V. S. Aiyar into the cult of terrorism. He shot dead Robert William D' Estecourt Ashe, Collector of Tirunelveli, in his first class compartment at the Maniyachi

Railway Station. After the murder, Vanchi Iyer sped away, locked himself in a lavatory at the end of the platform and fatally shot himself in the mouth. Curiously, V. V. S. Aiyar was not at all implicated (perhaps for lack of information to the police) in the Ashe murder case but Nilakanta Brahmachari who had no connection at all was made the first accused and had to suffer 7 years Rigorous Imprisonment [61] Apart from this single incident, we do not find any other terrorist rumblings in South India in this period.

Punjab also swung towards a rather short-lived extremism between 1905 and 1907. The provocative measures of the British authorities who subjected the peasantry of all classes and religions to great hardship by introducing the Chenab colonies bill in October 1906, enhancing the canal water cess in November 1906, and hiking the land revenue, produced great commotion and discontent among the people of Panjab. Panjabis found two able leaders to their cause in Lala Lajpath Rai and Sirdar Ajit Singh (the paternal uncle of Sirdar Bhagat Singh). The latter was more vehement, militant and steadfast, and he addressed innumerable meetings of the peasants and developed a virtual anti-British groundswell. He is reported to have seduced the Sikh troops at some places also. It is now established by his own memoirs that he along with his brother Sirdar Kishan Singh (Bhagat Singh's father) and one Ghasita Ram, founded the Bharat Mata Society – a secret society with the avowed object of overthrowing the British Rule. [62] Bhai Paramanand of the later Lahore conspiracy case fame (1915), was also said to have joined this society at a later date. The British took no chances and saved their position by deporting both Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh. Ajit Singh later fled to Persia and thence to Brazil In the United Provinces, a periodical named *Swarajya* created a lot of commotion during 1907–10, by intrepidly preaching revolutionary ideas and advocating armed revolution.

The first determined and persistent impulse towards a revolutionary movement in those now peaceful provinces came from the establishment of the *Swarajya*

(self-government) newspaper in November 1907, by a certain Shanti Narain, native of the United Provinces, who had formerly been sub-editor of a Punjab newspaper and desired to commemorate the release of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, the Punjab deportees The tone of this paper was hostile to Government from the first and gradually intensified in virulence. Finally Shanti Narain was condemned to a long term of imprisonment for objectionable articles on the Muzaffarpur murders The *Swarajya*, however, proceeded on its way under eight successive editors, three of whom were prosecuted and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for objectionable publications. Seven of these editors came from the Punjab. The paper was only suppressed when the new Indian Press Act of 1910 came in to force. Of its offending articles one was a panegyric on Khudiram Basu, the Muzaffarpur murderer, others related to such subjects as "Bomb or Boycott," "Tyrant and oppressor." Notwithstanding the perseverance with which the paper wages war on the Government, it produced no visible effect in the Provinces. The *Karmayogin*, a paper of similar tendencies published late in 1909, also at Allahabad, and suppressed in 1910, was equally ineffective. [63]

It is quite interesting to note that just as the activities of the revolutionaries in European countries were very much upset and curtailed by 1910 or so, another vast refuge and fertile field of action became available for revolutionary activities in the United States of America and Canada. Towards the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a regular exodus of Punjab peasants to the outside world – to Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Hongkong, Shanghai and other parts of China; then to Australia, and finally to Canada and U. S A. In America, they were very much looked down upon and were subject to a sort of racial hatred even. The slavish condition of their mother-land was one of the chief causes for the harsh and humiliating treatment meted out to them and whereas the Japanese and

Chinese Governments were intervening with the American Government to protect and respect their nationals, the British Indian Government was largely indifferent to the fate of Indian nationals in America and Canada. Most of the Indian immigrants in America were Sikhs and many among them were retired soldiers or policemen too. The humiliations and deprivations they were subjected to were too much for their self-respect to bear with and they were an inflammable human material to work with for the revolutionaries The Indian students in America, mainly in the Stanford University in California, were divided into the Punjabi and Bengali groups and were largely indifferent to the fate of their fellow Indian labourers in that country. But some of them were inspired by the revolutionary movement in India and some like Jitendranath Lahiri were themselves ex-revolutionaries. As early as in 1907, Panduranga Khankoji, Dr. Taraknath Das, etc., established the "Indian Independence League" in California. But it was with the arrival of Lala Hardayal in the U. S. A. in 1911, that real momentum was gained. At the instance of Jitendra Nath Lahiri and other revolutionary students, Lala Hardayal began concerted organization among the Sikh and other Indian labourers in the countryside and imbued them with the noble spirit of revolutionary nationalism. A Pacific Coast Hindustani Association with Hardayal as General Secretary and Sohan Singh Bakhna as President, was formed A 'Yugantar Ashram' was established at San Francisco and with it as the head-quarters, the association developed all over the Pacific Coast by leaps and bounds. From November 1, 1913, a weekly journal *Ghadar,* sometimes called the Hindustani Ghadar, began to be published which became the chief medium of ideological propoganda and political guidance to the thousands of immigrant Indians in America and Canada. It sought to arouse the national self-respect of the Indians by always emphasising the point that since they were slaves in their own country, they were not respected abroad even. It vigorously exposed the atrocities of British Rule in India and openly called for its overthrow by a violent revolution. The Association soon came to be known as the Ghadar party after

the name of this illustrious weekly so ably edited by Hardayal. Innumerable immigrant Indian youths, mainly Sikhs, offered their all in service of their party and motherland and were ready to lay even their lives at the altar of the motherland. The Ghadarites maintained contacts and relations with all anti-British forces in the world and many articles relating to Indian freedom struggle, British atrocities and Ghadar movement, were regularly published in the *Gaelic American*, an Irish revolutionary journal from U. S. A. The Ghadar leaders established firm connections with the German government and wanted to utilise all possible German military and financial aid in the event of a world war breaking out. Their motto was 'our enemy's enemy is our friend'. But they did not forsake an iota of their revolutionary principles for that friendship.

It is noteworthy that the backbone of the movement, as also the overwhelming majority of the fighters, were from the 'illiterate, ignorant' peasant and worker stock which was altogether a novel development in those days. Even back in India the revolutionary movement was largely a phenomenon confined to the educated middle classes. Whereas the top leaders of the Ghadar party coming from intellectual and student sections did not, with some notable exceptions, live up to the ideals they themselves set, the rank and file members from the hard-working peasant and labour classes did enthusiastically plunge into the revolutionary struggle with utmost self-sacrifice. The most striking feature of the Ghadar party was the complete secular atmosphere manifest in the activities and attitudes of the party. Religion was strictly confined to the private sphere and even the wearing of the five K's was not considered obligatory for the Sikh members of the party. For this 'sin,' the Ghadrites were denigrated as anti-Sikh by the Khalsa Diwan Society in Stockton and Chief Khalsa Diwan in Amritsar. Hence, it is not at all correct to characterize it as a 'militant Sikh movement' and it is equally incorrect to overstate the role of Hindu leadership in the movement. The Ghadarites called upon "all the sons of Bharat Mata" to unite and asked the Sikhs to emulate the revolutionaries of Bengal and Maharashtra.[64]

The Ghadar party was also a pioneer in its conception of the necessity to wage a prolonged guerilla warfare in India. They did not dream that in one day or one month they would be able to liberate India at a stroke. They wanted first to liberate Jammu and Kashmir, and then with that as a base area extend step by step in the course of fierce battles and prolonged guerrilla war, which they thought may take about 10 years. They seriously intended to infiltrate into India in large numbers from 1915, and hoped to liberate the whole of India and declare it as a Federated Republic by 1925.[65]

Anyhow, the efforts of the Ghadarites were inseparably linked with the efforts for German aid going on in Berlin and other European centres and the activities of the national revolutionaries of Bengal and the United Provinces So we once again come back to the Indian sphere to probe into the activities of the Indian revolutionary groups.

We have learnt that with the amalgamation of the Chandernagore and Benares groups, the Anushilan Samiti had emerged as the most well-knit, most widespread and most powerful revolutionary organization in India, and also it found a priceless titan of a revolutionary leader in Rash Behari Bose. The most daring action undertaken by Rash Behari before World War I, was the attempt on the life of the Governor-General Hardinge. On 23 December, 1912, that day when Hardinge was formally entering the new Imperial Capital of India to take office, a bomb was thrown on him at Chandni Chowk. Hardinge, who was sitting on an elephant, was injured and his mahout died. The bomb was said to have been thrown by one Basant Kumar Biswas, and Rash Behari was said to have been waiting on the road-side apparently watching the vice-regal procession at the time of the attack.[66] Five months later a bomb explosion in Lahore led to some remarkable and curious disclosures whereby a Delhi Conspiracy case was instituted and Amir Chand, Avad Behari, Balmokand and Basant Kumar Biswas were sentenced to death and hanged. But Rash Behari escaped and persisted in further revolutionary activities.[67]

However, the most daring and ingenious plan of Rash Behari Bose was his concrete proposal for a general uprising in 1915 after the first World War had broken out. In this, he was ably assisted by the Ghadar fighters who began to pour in thousands into the country according to a pre-arranged plan as soon as the war broke out, in order to start an armed revolution in the country. By 1913–14, the Juganthar group of revolutionaries in Bengal also developed rapidly in strength, organization and resources. In contrast to the Anushilan Samiti which was a rigid centralized party, the 'Juganthar' party developed more as a loose federation of various revolutionary groups in the province. But it achieved sufficient unity amidst its ranks and by the time World War I broke out or within a few months after that, Jatindranath Mukerji ('Bagha' Jatin) emerged as the undisputed leader and commander-in-chief of all the revolutionary groups in Bengal, except the Anushilan. The most spectacular, sensational and important action as far as the Juganthar groups were concerned was the theft of Mauser pistols from Rodda and Company. This event was –

> ...of the greatest importance in the development of revolutionary crime in Bengal. On Wednesday, the 26th of August 1914, the clerk of Rodda & Co., whose duty it was to clear imports of arms and ammunition at the Custom Office, had cleared 202 cases of arms and ammunition, but had brought only 192 cases to his employer's warehouse in Vansittart Row. He had then left, saying that he was going to bring the remainder. He never returned and after three days the case was reported to the police The 10 missing cases contained 50 Mauser pistols and 46,000 rounds of Mauser ammunition for the same, the pistols were of larger size, 400 bore, and each pistol bore a number at which Rodda & Co, had a record The pistols were so constructed and packed that by attaching to the butt the box containing the pistols, a weapon was produced which could be fired from the shoulder in the same way as a rifle. The authorities have reliable

information to show that 44 of these pistols were almost at once distributed to 9 different revolutionary groups in Bengal, and it is certain that the pistols so distributed were used in 54 cases of dacoity or murder or attempts at dacoity and murder subsequent to August, 1914. It may indeed safely be said that few, if any, revolutionary outrages have taken place in Bengal since August, 1914, in which Mauser pistols stolen from Rodda & Co., have not been used.[68]

The Juganthar group seems to have hit upon a viable German connection towards the end of November, 1914, and early in 1915, a number of Bengal revolutionaries having faith in the leadership of Jatin Mukerji, met and put the whole scheme of raising a rebellion in India with the help of Germans on a proper footing. In pursuance of this scheme, daring dacoities in Garden Reach and Beliaghatia of Calcutta were committed under the personal leadership of Jatin Mukerji and an amount of about Rs. 40,000/– was realized. This money was to be used to send some revolutionaries to Germany to solicit help and to maintain the tempo of the organization in mobilization in the mean time. It was Jitendra Nath Lahiri who arrived in early March (1915), that brought to the Bengal revolutionaries specific offers of German help and as per his suggestion, Naren Bhattacharya (later M. N. Roy) was sent to Batavia.

Both the Anushilan and Juganthar parties wanted to exploit Britain's predicament in the War situation to their own advantage and start uprisings at the first favourable opportunity. Indeed the British, especially the British Indian government, were in acute difficulties in the first phase of the war. The G. O. I. had only 13,000 British solidiers at its disposal, who were being marched up and down the country to boost up the prestige of the Government.[69] Further, the Germans were all set to exploit Britain's troubles and actively encouraged and helped the formation of an Indian independence Committee in Berlin with veteran revolutionaries like Champakaraman Pillai, Bhupendranath Dutta, Hardayal, and

gave the Indians in exile there all necessary training in arms and manufacture of explosives. The revolutionaries in Europe were working feverishly to co-ordinate with the revolutionaries in India and to send them financial and arms aid. The Ghadar party in America immediately plunged itself into feverish activity upon the out-break of the World War. Dr. Panduranga Khankoje and other leaders of the Ghadar party were negotiating with the Turkish government for certain facilities by which streams of Ghadar fighters could be sent to India through the land route via Persia and Afghanisthan. By the end of 1914, as many as 4000 Ghadrites smuggled themselves into India by various ways. They were all spreading disaffection and preparing for a rising at the suitable opportunity. The *Komagata Maru* affair or what is also called the *Budge-Budge riot*, though in itself originally not seditious, created immense discontent and hostility against the British due to the high-handed handling of the affair and the indiscriminate firing which killed many passengers. Every effort was being made by the Indian revolutionaries abroad in concert with the Germans, to send ship-loads of arms and ammunition to the revolutionaries in India. In a word, the British government both at home and in India, was very hard-pressed and in a critical phase.

But unfortunately all the revolutionaries in India could not forge a single unified leadership and were broadly divided into the Anushilan and Juganthar loyalties. These two parties seriously differed as to the strategies to be followed in order to bring about general uprisings The Jugantar group had no faith in the projected scheme of the Anushilan for a sort of widespread armed uprising in Northern India They were also sceptical about the possibility and feasibility of weaning away sufficient number of soldiers from the British Indian Army for the purpose, and also about the possibility of maintaining the utmost secrecy and bringing about a concerted uprising on one day in as widely removed centres as Lahore, Rawalpindi, Delhi, Benares, Calcutta, etc. They preferred to rely more on the rank and file of the revolutionary groups, find methods to arm them sufficiently, and fight daring and unrelenting

Benares in January, 1915, gave the report that the situation was satisfactory. All cantonments in North India were contacted, most of the regiments promised to join the rebellion after it had actually broken out, but only two regiments in the Punjab were said to have agreed to begin the rebellion. This widespread infiltration of revolutionary ideology and plans into the armed forces was mainly possible due to the activities of four thousand odd Ghadarites who had already returned from America. Another 20,000 more were said to be ready to pour in as soon as the rebellion broke out This satisfied Rashbehari Bose completely and he fixed February 21, 1915, as the date of simultaneous risings all over India. He himself shifted to Lahore and assumed the direct command of the immediate preparations.

But the magnificent preparations were frustrated by the treachery of a single man who was later found out to be a police spy. One Kripal Singh, who was known to have been related to a great Punjabi revolutionary, Ajit Singh, somehow managed to get into the inner circle of the revolutionaries. A suspicion about him was communicated to Rashbehari who ordered that he should be removed from the earth. Rashbehari thereafter decided to antedate the event, and secret messages were sent to all relevant quarters intimating leaders of the projected rebellion, that the rising would take place on 19 February instead of 21 as originally fixed. But information about this change of the D-day somehow reached the ears of the traitor, and from his place of detention he could somehow transmit the information to the police headquarters. The police probably got the information at the eleventh hour and they immediately took steps for a general crack-down only about eight hours before the time scheduled for the general uprising. Rashbehari's headquarters were raided by a large contingent of police force at about 2 a.m. on 19th. Rashbehari and Pingley had already left the place. So they could not

be found there, but seven Ghadar revolutionaries were arrested from the house and large quantities of bombs, arms, ammunition and contraband articles and papers were seized by the police. Simultaneous operations were led at all the 26 cantonments where Indian soldiers were waiting in readiness to join the uprising at the zero hour (9 a.m. on 19th). They were arrested and disarmed. British tommies began to parade in the towns Fierce reprisals followed. Northern India was ransacked. Hundreds of revolutionaries were arrested. It appears however that the intimation about the change of date of the uprising from 21 to 19 did not reach the Anushilan leadership in Bengal and Benares and Satish Pakrashi, Anukul Chakravarty and others in Bengal had been eagerly awaiting the red signal from the Punjab and Delhi.

Altogether nine conspiracy trials took place at Lahore. In one of these cases 61 were prosecuted, in another the accused numbered 74 and in a third the figure was 12. As a result of all these cases, 28 persons were hanged, 29 were acquitted, and the rest were sentenced to transportation and imprisonment. [71]

Kartar Singh 'Sarabha' who fearlessly and with a smile ascended the gallows (and was the idol of the later Sirdar Bhagat Singh), Balwanth Singh who proudly courted the death sentence, and innumerable other martyrs of this projected uprising had blazed a glorious trail of self-sacrifice, dedication and daring, to the future revolutionaries by their supreme sacrifices at the altar of the mother-land.

The Ghadar party made elaborate arrangements to wean away the Indian regiments stationed in South East Asian cantonments and organising a simultaneous uprising there also. In this courageous and risky endeavour, many revolutionaries lost their lives. Sohanlal Pathak who refused to ask for pardon and embraced death on the gallows in Rangoon, Amar Singh,

engineer, hanged at Mandalay for his part in the smuggling of German arms to India, are only two among many such martyrs. The immigrant Indians in Shanghai were also closely linked with these secret endeavours and mainly worked to smuggle arms to India. It is also quite remarkable that two Indian regiments stationed in Singapore were won over, and whereas one regiment was promptly transferred as the secret leaked out by February 19th, the other regiment did revolt. The rebellion which did not materialize in Punjab did break out in Singapore on February 21, 1915,[72] but in vain

Vishnu Ganesh Pingley was arrested on 23 March, in the lines of the 12th Indian Cavalry at Meerut, with a box in his possession containing ten bombs, 'sufficient to annihilate half a regiment.' He was afterwards convicted of participation in the Lahore conspiracy and sentenced to death. Rash Behari left the country after a final interview with a few of his Benares disciples at Calcutta, in the course of which he informed them that he was going to 'some hills' and would not be back for two years.[73] He left Calcutta for Japan on 12 May, 1915, in the disguise of Raja Pramtha Nath Tagore.[74] With this the curtain falls on the activities of Anushilan in the period dealt with here.

Now to come to the activities of the Jugantar party, Naren Bhattacharya (later M. N. Roy) started in April, 1915, for Batavia under the pseudonym of C. Martin.

> On his arrival at Batavia "Martin" was introduced by the German Consul to Theodor Helfferich, who stated that a cargo of arms and ammunition was on its way to Karachi to assist the Indians in a revolution. "Martin" then urged that the ship should be diverted to Bengal. This was eventually agreed to after reference to the German Consul General in Shanghai. "Martin" then returned to make arrangements in the Sundarbans. The Cargo was said to consist of 30,000 rifles with 600 rounds of ammunition each and 2 lakhs of rupees. Meanwhile "Martin" had telegra-

phed to Harry & Sons in Calcutta, a bogus firm kept by a well-known revolutionary, that 'Business was helpful.' In June Harry & Sons wired to 'Martin' for money, and then began a series of a remittance from Helfferich in Batavia to Harry & Sons in Calcutta between June and August, which aggregated Rs. 43,000, of which the revolutionaries received Rs. 33,000 before the authorities discovered what was going on.

'Martin' returned to India in the middle of June, and the conspirators Jatin Mukharji, Jadu Gopal Mukharji, Narendra Bhattacharji ('Martin'), Bholanath Chatarji and Atul Ghosh set about making plans to receive the Maverick's cargo and employ it to the best advantage. They decided to divide the arms into three parts, to be sent respectively to –

1. Hatia, for the Eastern Bengal districts, to be worked by the members of the Barisal party; 2. Calcutta; 3. Balasore.

They considered that they were numerically strong enough to deal with the troops in Bengal, but they feared reinforcements form outside. With this idea in view they decided to hold up the three main railways into Bengal by blowing up the principal bridges. Jatindra was to deal with the Madras railway from Balasore, Bholanath Chatarji was sent to Chakradharpur to take charge of the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, while Satish Chakrabarti was to go to Ajay and blow up the bridge on the East Indian Railway. Naren Chaudhuri and Phanindra Chakrabarti were told off to go to Hatia, where a force was to collect, first, to obtain control of the Eastern Bengal districts and then to march on to Calcutta. The Calcutta Party, under Naren Bhattacharji and Bepin Ganguli, were first to take possession of all the arms and arsenals around Calcutta, then to take Fort William, and afterwards to

sack the town of Calcutta. The German officers arriving in the Maverick were to stay in Eastern Bengal and raise and train armies.

In the meantime, the work of taking delivery of the cargo of the Maverick was apparently arranged by Jadu Gopal Mukharji who is said to have placed himself in communication with a zamindar in the vicinity of Rai Mangal, who had promised to provide men, lighters, etc., for the unloading of the vessel. The Maverick would arrive at night and would be recognised by a series of lamps hung horizontally. It was hoped that the first distribution of arms would take place by the 1st of July 1915.

There was no doubt that some men, under instructions from Atul Ghosh, actually went down by boat to the neighbourhood of Rai Mangal to help in the unloading of the Maverick. They seemed to have stayed there about ten days, but by the end of June the Maverick had not arrived, nor had any message been received from Batavia to explain the delay.

While the conspirators were waiting for the Maverick a Bengali arrived from Bangkok on the 3rd July with a message from Atmaram, a Punjabi conspirator there, that the German Consul in Siam was sending by boat a consignment of 5,000 rifles and ammunition and 1 lakh of rupees to Rai Mangal. The conspirators thinking this was in substitution of the Maverick's cargo induced the Bengali messenger to return to Bangkok via Batavia and talk Helfferich not to change the original plan and that other consignments of arms might be landed at Haitia (Sandwip) and Balasore in the Bay of Bengal or Gokarni in the west coast of India, south of Karwar. In July Government learnt of the projected landing of arms at Rai Mangal and took precautions.

On the 7th August the police, on information received, searched the premises of Harry & Sons and effected some arrests.

On the 13th August one of the conspirators sent from Bombay a warning telegram to Hellferich in Java and on the 15th of August Narendra Bhattacharji ("Martin") and another started for Batavia to discuss matters with Hellferich.

On the 4th of September the Universal Emporium at Balasore, a branch of Harry & Sons, was searched, as also a revolutionary retreat at Kaptipada 20 miles distant, where a map of the Sunderbans was found together with a cutting from a Penang paper about *Maverick*. Eventually a gang of five Bengalis was 'rounded up', and in the fight which ensued Jatin Mukharji, the leader, and Chittapriya Ray Chaudhri, the murderer of Inspector Suresh Chandra Mukharji, were killed.[75]

This was the first ever armed battle of the revolutionaries with the police and the heroic martyrdom of Bagha Jathin was a source of continuous inspiration to generations of revolutionaries in Bengal ever since that time. Naren Battacharya's persistent endeavours to supply arms either from the sea route or via the overland route from China only amounting to a 'wild goose chase', he @ Martin @ M. N. Roy, first took refuge in the U. S. A. But there he was implicated in the San Francisco (Indo-German) conspiracy case, escaped to Mexico, became a convinced Marxist there and even formed there the first ever Communist Party outside Russia. With this abortive attempt at an armed uprising, the activities of the Juganthar party in the period under review can also be said to have come to an end.

Finally, we should also take note of the famous San Francisco (Indo-German) conspiracy case in U. S. A. in which many top leaders of the Ghadar party were sentenced to imprisonment for various terms. Champaka Raman Pillai's setting

up of the Indian Nationalist Party in Germany and its eventual merger with the 'Berlin Committee' also need some mentioning. Despite its concerted activities, the 'Indian Independence Committee' (or the Berlin Committee simply) was not rewarded with tangible successes. The 'eccenric efforts' of Raja Mahendra Pratap and his Premier, Maulana Obeidullah 'Sindi' from Kabul also failed to deliver any goods. The Hindustani Fanatics established in the independent territory across the border of the North-West Frontier and their occassional border forays, were no more than a slight headache to the British Indian Government. The much advertised 'Silk letters Conspiracy' in which the Maulana of Deoband school, Obeidullah, tried to start a *Jihad* against Britain with a handful of Mujahids who fled to Kabul from Lahore and solicited cooperation from various old friends of his by addressing letters written on yellow silk and in the name of the Provisional Government of Mahendra Pratap, now seems to be nothing more than a ridiculous episode. It is quite interesting to note that in Obeidullah's "Army of God", there were three patrons, twelve Field Marshals, a Major-General, one Colonel and six Lt. Colonels but hardly any soldiers at all !

After 1916 till the end of the period under review we hardly find any revolutionary activities worth speaking of. either in India or abroad.

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CHAPTER IV

NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENT AND THE REVOLUTIONARIES

The period 1919-23 was a period of lull in revolutionary activities all over the country, while at the same time mass struggles rose to an unprecedented scale under the novel leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in this peroid. However, this period is of great significance to the later growth of the revolutionary movement since it afforded valuable breathing space to the ever-haunted revolutionaries, as also made available to them militant nationalist human material drawn into the fold of the great Non-co-operation Movement and other struggles led by the Congress, from which they (the revolutionaries) were able to recruit considerable number of firebrands. Further, in the mass movements of the day itself, the role of the revolutionaries was not inconsiderable. So, in this chapter we will deal at length with the important developments of this period.

WORLD WAR I AND INDIA

When the First World War broke out, the attitudes taken by the Congress nationalists – extremists and moderates alike, in India can, at the best, be described as 'dubious' The Indian National Congress upto some time well after the end of the War, was only a petitioning body publicly expressing loyalty to the British Crown. But this avowal was more a reflection of the exigencies of the situation and the awareness of the then unassaialable might of the British Empire as well as the obvious disarmed and weak position of the Indian subjects. So we find that the nationalist leaders chose to take a course of loud professions of loyalty in public but in their innermost hearts were fired with a desire to see their own rulers humbled. Immediately on the out-break of War, a Congress deputation which then happened to be in London in connection with the proposed reforms for the Indian Council, unequivocally

declared "... that they can have no other thought than that of being united with the British nation in the whole-hearted endeavour to secure a speedy victory for the Empire." [1] At that time the only real national movement was the revolutionary movement and in the last chapter, we have seen at great length how the revolutionaries wanted to take advantage of Britain's predicaments in War and organise armed uprisings to overthrow the British rule by force and to take all possible German aid to further this aim. The Congress nationalists, especially the extremists, exhibited a split personality and though they fully sympathised with the efforts of the revolutionaries, were not prepared to embark on such adventures. They knew the might of the British arms only too well and preferred to wrest some reforms by appealing to the democratic ethos of the British public, and by openly supporting the war efforts of the Government of India. But as the war dragged on and the British repression in India began tightening as the plans of the revolutionaries came to light and were foiled, as the Defence of India Act (the equivalent of the British Defence of Realm Act, but with more stringent provisions) held the country in its grip, the tone of the Congress also changed. So much so, that Jawaharlal Nehru has put it quite aptly thus :

> There was little sympathy with the British inspite of loud professions of loyalty. Moderate and extremists alike learned with satisfaction of German victories. There was no love for Germany, of course, only the desire to see our own ruler humbled. It was the weak and helpless man's idea of vicarious revenge. I suppose most of us viewed the struggle with mixed feelings. [2]

In its session of 1915, the Congress demanded substantial measures of reform towards the attainment of self-government.

In the first years of War, the British were also quite circumspect about the Indian offers of assistance and did not accept the Indian recruits to War. So much so that even Indian contributions to the War Fund were not welcomed Just as the Congress nationalists, especially extremists like

Mrs Besant and Tilak, felt in their inner hearts that "England's necessity is India's opportunity," and accordingly began to agitate for Home Rule while at the same time professing loyalty to the British Crown, so were the British bureaucrats while welcoming these professions of loyalty in public, did refuse to take them at face-value and, of course, they knew the situation better. But once the plans of the Indian revolutionaries had been totally foiled and the back of the revolutionary movement surely broken by the Lahore conspiracy cases and large scale detentions under Regulation III of 1818 in Bengal and under the Defence of India Act, the British no longer saw any wisdom in still persisting in the above course. Moreover, the War situation turned quite critical, the joining of Turkey with the German side gravely threatened the continuance of loyalties of the Muhammadan subjects of British India, and after all they could not be too greedy over parting with crumbs when the whole was at the risk of being lost. So, they began to change their policy of indifference to Indian offers of help and began intense recruiting in the Indian provinces and states from 1917 onwards. They followed this with some dramatic changes of policy on the political side to appease the sentiments of the Congress nationalists in India.

So came out the historic announcement of August 20, 1917, made by the then Secretary of State for India, Mr. E. S. Montagu, making it clear to all, especially to Indians that:

> The policy of his Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. [8]

Certainly this was a great step ahead compared to the then existing policies of the British government, since for the first time the realisation of a responsible government was officially admitted to be the desired objective. But in so much as the adjective 'progressive' was attached, it hinted that no immediate spectacular changes can be expected therefrom.

The effect of this announcement was quickly seen in the resultant cleavage of the ranks of the Nationalist Party. The Moderates frankly welcomed the declaration as the 'Magna Charta of India'. The extremists on the other hand expressed dissatisfaction at the guarded phraseology of the announcement, which they deemed to fall very short of India's deserts and aspiration. They desired that agitation should continue, and urged the adoption of a policy of passive resistance with the object of impressing upon the British people the necessity of conciliating the party of advance in India. [4]

Out there in England and also in the British Indian bureaucratic circles, even this announcement for limited reforms was anathema to the conservative sections. So much so that the announcement was said to sound the death-knell of the British rule in India. The stick aspect of the British carrot and stick policy was largely due to the overwhelming influence of these sections. Though the British sense of truth and honesty prevented them from retracing from the historic announcement of Mr. Montagu, they simultaneously started countervailing measures by way of instituting the Rowlatt Commission. The Commission was required to inquire into the anarchical and revolutionary conspiracies and crimes in India and suggest the necessary repressive measures to be taken after the expiry of the Defence of India Act once the War came to an end.

Anyway, the announcement of August 20, 1917, created in the main a relieving effect as for as the Indian leaders and masses were concerned and greatly promoted the British War efforts. A War Conference was held at Delhi from April 27 to 29, 1918, with the object—

> ... to invite the co-operation of all classes, first, in sinking domestic dissentions ... secondly, in concerting measures for the successful prosecution of the war ... ... and thirdly, in cheerfully bearing the sacrifice demanded for the achievement of victory. [5]

All the participants in the Conference (certain Ruling chiefs, non-official members of the Legislative Council, officials) enthusiastically responded to the Viceroy's proposals and to the 'gracious message' from 'His Majesty, the King-Emperor' which brought to their notice that

> The need of the Empire is India's opportunity, and I am confident that, under the sure guidance, of my Viceroy, her people will not fail in their endeavours. [6]

And his belief was not misplaced either. There was great response and the extent of the total war contributions of India was aptly summed up by the Maharajah of Bikaner thus:

> The essential aims of the Allies appealed strongly to the moral sense of the people of India, and their growing consciousness of nationhood attached them more deeply to the British cause . . . ... Lord Curzon wrote that the Indian Expeditionary Force arrived on the Western front in the nick of the time and helped to save the cause both of the Allies and of civilization ... ... Altogether India had put into the field close upon one and a half million men and her casualties amounted to over 106, 000. In addition to substantial contributions from the general public for war purposes and charities, India had made a free gift of Rs. 100,000,000 to the British Exchequer and last September she made herself responsible for a further Rs. 46,000,000. Her military budget had risen from some twenty one and one fourth millions in the last pre-war year to nearly 32 milions in 1918–19.
>
> India also rapidly improvised manufacture for export, and poured forth an ever-growing supply of munitions, food stuffs and produced clothing and equipment. Shortly after the conclusion of the Armistice a writer in *The Times Trade Supplement* laid it down as indisputable that 'if the resources of India had not been placed at the disposal of the Empire, the difficulties of the Allies would have been enormously increased,

> and the prosecution of their campaign on the great scale ultimately reached would not have been possible. [7]

Apart from this, there were substantial financial and man-power contributions from the Indian States too. The masses of Indian people suffered extreme deprivations due to the acute economic crisis generated by the war, and due to a great killer Influenza. In such circumstances,

> The end (of War - IMS) came with a suddenness which took most people by surprise. At first it was hardly believed ... there was a general rejoicing ... their joy was in large measures due to the results which they expected to follow from peace ... [8]

This complex post-War situation of extreme distress, high expectations and inevitable discontent was again magnificently summed up by the Maharajah of Bikanir :

> The cessation of hostilities came when India was suffering from famine condition, owing to the failure of the monsoon, and was passing through an extremely virulent epidemic of influenza, affecting in some parts 80 percent of the population and costing the lives of some 6,00,000 people (this is said by Rushbrook Williams to have far exceeded the depredations of plague in the former years - IMS). Moreover it was impossible for India to remain unaffected by the irresistible sway of world forces arising from the war. It was inevitable that the convulsions of this mighty struggle should be felt for many months after the sword was sheathed. The fountains of the great deep had been up, and the unrest and unsettlement produced were world-wide. The difficulties had been further accentuated by the unrest caused among the 67 millions of Indian Mahomedans arising from uncertainity and alarm in respect to the fate of Turkey and their spititual Khalif ... ... the outstanding fact was that India, having rallied to the cause of the Empire in August 1914, and having been staunch in

> both faith and work in the darkest days of the war, was loyal to her King - Emperor to the core and faithful to the British connection [9]

However, when to the rapidly intensifying post-war distress, two great irritants in the shape of the Rowlatt Act and the British 'betrayal' of the cause of the Khilafat were added, a veritable explosion took place in the already heavily charged political atmosphere of India

THE ROWLATT ACT

To people who so firmly bore the hardships of a great war and who, at least from the third year of the war, so whole-heartedly contributed their might to the war efforts, and who naturally expected a 'pat on the back' and a sure fruit of some sort of self-government and the consequent benefits, the Rowlatt Act came as a hard 'slap on the cheek' ! They were first dazed and after some time woke up in great fury to launch a violent agitation which almost buried whatever sense of loyalty to the British Crown they still cherished. The Sedition Committee presided over by Sir Sydney Rowlatt in 1918, had submitted a comprehensive report to the Government of India about the history and extent of the revolutionary movement in the country along with certain proposals for appropriate legislation to tackle with it.

> It had shown that between 1906 and 1918, in that one province [Bengal] alone 311 outrages were committed ; over 1,000 persons were accused ; and 84 only were convicted. The list of crimes perpetrated was as appalling as the brutality with which they were committed, and the material before the committee showed how widespread was the criminal organisation and how venomous was the revolutionary propaganda conducted in schools and colleges. Up to the time when the war broke out, the efforts of the police had been very largely baffled by the policy of terrorism pursued by a handful of desperate men. But with the passing of the Defence of India Act and the operations of the rules made under that Act ... ... the outrages

> fell in number very considerably. In view of the salutary effect of this temporary provision, the Rowlatt committee concluded that the principal requirement of the situation was the strengthening of the ordinary machinery of law and order in such fashion as to lend it permanently something of the power which it temporarily had acquired when buttressed by the Defence of India Act. Accordingly, Government determined to introduce two measures in the spring session of the Indian Legislative Council. One of the Bills was a temporary measure, intended to deal with the situation which would arise on the termination of the Defence of India Act six months after the formal restoration of peace ... [It] was framed to enable anarchical offences to be tried expeditiously ... ... the second of the "Rowlatt Bills" was intended to make permanent change in the ordinary criminal law of the land. The possession of seditious document with the intention to publish or to circulate the same was to be punishable with imprisonment ... [10]

But Nationalist India did not concur with the framers of these bills. The government through these bills could put anybody in the dock or prison in the name of countering anarchy or revolution. An indignant Bipin Chandra Pal asked: "Will these Bills kill the revolutionary movement, has repression ever killed revolution in any part of this world," and he expressed in no uncertain terms that

> These two Bills are reasonably calculated to increase the virulence of the repression and revolution. It will drive honest patriotism underground, it will initiate innocents, it will kill the confidence of the people and the possibility of the realisation of their national freedom inside the British Empire ... they are aimed at the political life of the country. They want to demoralise all our political activities ... After demoralisation comes desperation and after ... [it] ... comes suicide ... it bodes no good to the people, it bodes no good to the government ... [11]

So we find a law basically aimed at controlling or liquidating the activities of revolutionaries, raising a storm of protest from the non- (if not anti-) revolutionary sections of the nationalist movement even. We further see that this – what we may call the vicarious impact of the revolutionary movement, was the main cause for a flare-up of public discontent under the leadership of an avowedly non-violent, non-revolutionary Mahatma But the point is whether the government of India was really justified in its apprehensions about a spurt in revolutionary activities with the lapse of the Defence of India Act. A secret Intelligence Report, dated 30 November, 1918, i.e., much prior to the outbreak of the Anti-Rowlatt Bills agitation, referred to an 'unsolicited' letter from a former member of the *Yuganthar* which revealed certain startling secrets. The revolutionary groups were said to be divided in their approach towards the Montford reforms and as to how they should respond to the Peace situation. But all the revolutionaries were said to be in one voice regarding the need to rouse the public to fight for the political emanicipation of the country A section of revolutionaries was said to be against any sort of overt activities until the leaders in prisons were released. The Dacca and Comilla Anushilan Samitis were said to be favouring the old type of murders, dacoities, etc , whereas another group suggested an entirely novel method of murders by the use of potassium cyanide, etc. But another militant section suggested a very interesting line of activity, that if by systematic works the country could be made into a chaos, the people might be roused with a feeling of antipathy towards the government. Since violent works, murders and dacoities attract the notice of the government very easily, the following activities which might not give the idea that the nationalists were at the root was suggested : 1. Looting by illiterate masses ; 2. Arson ; 3. Throwing bogus bombs at Government Houses, etc. ; 4 Burning of Government records; 5. Cutting of telegraph lines ; 6. Interception of of mail ; 7. Writing bogus letters ; 8. Assaults on Government officials. The purpose was to create a *gol mal* which indirectly would touch the public more than anything else, rousing consequently in them an inveterate hatred for the system of

weak government which could not check this *gol-mal.* These could not give the government the least idea that the anarchists were at the bottom [12] Unless we are to hold that this document is a manufactured one and is a later addition to justify the dark deeds of the British in the later disturbances in the Punjab, we cannot fail to notice the striking similarity between the line advocated above and the pattern of the actual disturbances that took place in the far-away province of Punjab during April, 1919. This may be stretching things too far. But anyway we may be justified in holding this much in concurrence with the learned view of that doyen of historians. R. C. Mazumdar

> ...it was urged by the Government that India might be well described as in a state of unarmed revolt, and the underground revolutionary movement, spreading over a wide region in India, was far from being rooted out altogether. This view of the Government cannot be brushed aside altogether. Subsequent events have shown that the revolutionary crimes always increased after the withdrawal of coercive legisation, and *it can hardly be gainsaid that there was no peace but an undeclared war in India against the British rule.* From the point of view of the security of British rule in India ... ... their action cannot be summarily pronounced to be either unjust or unwise [13]

Anyway despite numerous public meetings held all over the country to protest against this 'lawless law' and despite the concerted opposition of all non-official members of the Council, the first Bill was passed on 18 March – the officials alone voting in its favour – and placed on the statute book on March 21, 1919. This immediately led to the launching of a vigorous *Satyagraha* by M. K. Gandhi with fateful consequences.

> The most curious part of the whole episode is that while the new Act practically remained a dead letter – thus falsifying the anticipations and arguments of both its framers and opponents – it brought in to

> lime-light a political leader [in the person of Gandhi] who was destined to achieve worldwide fame and distinction such as seldom has been the lot of any non-official political leader in any country [14]

A *hartal* was fixed on 30 March, 1919, in protest against the Rowlatt Act (the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919 – to be more precise), but the date was later changed to April 6. Since the message of change in date reached Delhi late, A *hartal* was observed in Delhi on March 30,itself. Police high-handedness provoked mob violence which again was used as a justification to call in the military which opened fire on the masses, killing five on the spot and injuring many But Swami Shraddanand, head of the local satyagraha, hurried to the spot, quieted the mob then mad with rage over the indiscriminate shooting by the military on the helpless, un-armed crowd. The Great Hartal of April 6, set in motion by Mahatma Gandhi was memorable in the history of Indian Nationhood From Simla to Cape Comorin, from Calcutta to Bombay, in the Capital cities and in the mofussil towns, the Great Hartal was complete and peaceful. [15]

But a most unwise action of the government on April 9 set off a chain reaction of innumerable bloody riots at many places all over the country and culminated in the most tragic Jullianwallahbagh massacre, and proclamation of Martial law in Punjab. It is not at all clear from the material available at present as to why the Government of India chose to act upon this unwise course even after the Great Hartal of April 6 passed off peacefully. But the fact is that Gandhi who was already on his train journey to Delhi was served in the middle of his journey on April 9, with an order not to enter the province of Punjab, not to enter Delhi, and to restrict himself to Bombay. When Gandhi decided to disobey the order and proceeded further, he was arrested and deported by a special train to Bombay.

> Sir Michael O' Dwyer, the mighty apostle of the cult of "Mailed fist", now had his opportunity ... ... On

> April 9th he sent orders of deportation of Drs. Satyapal and Kitchlew of Amritsar. The Hartal [of April 6th] was not much of a success in the Punjab. Drs. Satyapal and Kitchlew had therefore invited the Mahatama to the Punjab to organise Satyagraha in the wider scale There was nothing unusual at Amritsar when the order for deportation reached the unsuspecting and amazed Dy. Commissioner, Mr Irvine, ... The doctors were privately invited at Mr Irvins's bungalow and at once secretly deported, millitary arrangements having been previously made to disperse anticipated mobs by fire. [16]

April 9, was Rama Navami day and it passed off quite festively and peacefully at Amritsar. Actually, Sir Michael O' Dwyer on the eve of his retirement held his last council on April 7, and in it he had asserted:

> The British Government which has crushed foreign foes and quelled internal rebellion could afford to despise the agitators ... From the prince's palace down to the peasant's hut, I found I could meet a Panjabee whatever his class or condition as man to man without suspicion or mistrust. [17]

It is curious to note that this very person set on roll a series of fateful events and had to declare this very Punjab to be in revolt within a few days after this assertion.

The news of arrest and deportation of Drs. Satyapal and Kitchlew spread like wild fire and within a few hours Amritsar was ablaze with riot and incendiarism. There are conflicting views as to whether the riots started first or the indiscriminate firing only provoked a too infuriated mob. But on April 10, for all practical purposes, Amritsar was under the control of mobs. Several Europeans were cruelly murdered, Banks looted, arson widespread and even European ladies not spared as illustrated by the brutal attack on Miss Sherwood who was almost beaten to death. For the first time after the 1857 Mutiny, the cries of 'Maro Angrez' (Kill the English!) were said to have been shouted by the mobs, this along with

shouts of 'Gandhi Ka raj Aa Gaya' (Gandhi's rule has come), and H.D. Craik said he remembered one place where Zamindars burnt the revenue records with the cry "Hor Sadha Raj ho giya" (Now it's our Raj).[18] The Europeans grew panicky and removed themselves – men, women and children all to the Fort, and military reinforcements were summoned. Relief came from Lahore and Jullundhar. Next day the town was quiet and under military occupation. Sir Michael o' Dwyer wirelessed to Simla that there was *rebellion* and imperatively demanded declaration of Martial law. Meanwhile, General Dyer came over from Jullundhar with his brigade and occupied the town on the 12 April.[19]

> The situation elsewhere in India was also explosive. On the report that Mr. Gandhi has been arrested, an angry mob attacked the telegraph office and other government buildings at Ahmedabad and killed English and Indian Officials. Here also the railway lines were damaged and telegraph wires were cut. Trouble also occurred in the Bombay presidency at Viramgam and Nadiad. On April 12th, there were disturbances in Bombay city In the Punjab meanwhile excitement was steadily rising, and a number of posters made their appearance in Lahore and elsewhere inciting the people to open rebellion... On the same day, April 12th, serious news was also received from Calcutta, ... Here again firing was begun killing five or six men and wounding twelve others. On the 13th April when all telegraphic communication with the Punjab had been cut, the Government of India received a wireless message from Lahore, in which the local government reported that railway stations between Kasur and Amritsar had been looted, a British soldier being killed and two officers injured at Kasur, that bands of rebels were on the move and a state of open rebellion existed in Lahore and Amritsar. The Lt. Governor, with the concurrence of the General Officer commanding, 16th Division, and the Chief Justice of the High Court, urged the suspension of the ordinary criminal courts and the establishment of

Martial Law. On receipt of this message, and in view of previous report, the Government of India determined to proclaim martial law in the Amritsar and Lahore districts, and a few days later extended it to the Gujranwallah, Gujrat and Lyallpur districts.[10]

THE JALLIANWALLA BAGH MASSACRE

Though the Martial Law as was actually proclaimed on April 15, in the Amritsar and Lahore districts, Amritsar was under a de-facto Martial Law since April 12. The next day after he occupied the town i.e , on 13 April, General Dyer came to know about a proposal to hold a public meeting in the evening and marched through the streets of Amritsar in the morning announcing that any sort of meeting was strictly prohibited, and warned that if any persons dared to gather then they would be "gollee sa chittar bhittar dega" (shattered with bullets).

It was the Baisakhi day of Amritsar. Thousands annually meet here on this day to hold an annual fair and come over from long distance. Thousands also of Amritsar people collected not knowing that the prohibition in the morning included also a non-political national mela. The mela people numbered between 16 to 20 thousands; they were all collected inside the bagh which is a square plot of land surrounded on all sides by houses and high walls with only 4 narrow entrances allowing not more than 2 persons to walk abreast.

Such was the pin-hole, more congested now than the mythical Black Hole, in which was enacted the most horrible massacre of modern history. On arriving at the scene the General entered with his troops through one of the entrances but had regretfully to leave the armoured cars outside because of its narrowness, and forthwith proceeded to a high ground, deployed his troops to the right and the left and within 80 seconds opened fire. *The firing was individual and not volley-fire*. It continued for 10 minutes;

> from time to time he directed it against where the crowd was thickest. Altogether 1,650 rounds were fired. Some 5 to 6 hundred were killed outright, and three times the number lay wounded. People ran for their life as soon as the firing commenced. There was no warning, no demonstration. The unarmed innocent people, most of them villagers, sat at that time squatting on the ground, knew not what was happening. They fled and fell They tried to climb up the high walls and fell They cried, they shrieked, panic-stricken, terror stricken, were *golle sa chittar bhittered,* their plight can better be imagined than described.[21]

The disturbances in the Punjab continued for some days after the events at Amritsar, the mob-attacks at Gujranwala on 14th, being of a very serious dimension. The railway station was attacked and telegraph lines were cut The disturbance here was restrained by use of aeroplanes, 'the only force immediately available.' Until the 21st we find continual attacks upon Railways, Telegraph lines and communication generally, at various places in the Punjab but afterwards no further reports of open disorder were received.

Mahatma Gandhi was greatly shocked at this bloody turn of events in the country. He rushed to Ahmedabad and fasted there. His presence in Ahmedabad pacified the people there. He admitted that the he had made a blunder of "Himalayan" dimension by calling upon people who were not fit to conscientiously observe all the limitations of a satyagrahi, to launch a campaign of Civil Disobedience, and he announced the suspension of the movement much to the chagrin of many of his supporters.

The true and grue-some account of the Jallianwallah Bagh Massacre and other atrocities perpetrated under Martial Law came to light only after the lifting of Martial Law in the Punjab on 11 June, 1919. Much credit in this matter of exposing the atrocities of Martial Law is due to the revered Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Swami Shraddhanand and Sri V. N. Tivari of the Seva Samithi, Allahabad.

It is wearisome to detail all the horrors of the reign of Terror in this period. The German atrocities in Belgium, to avenge which India, in the language of Lord Hardinge, "had been bled white," pale into insignificance before the Martial Law administrators of the Punjab. .. As says Sir P. S. Sivaswamy Iyar: "The wholesale slaughter of hundreds of unarmed men at Jallianwala Bagh without giving the crowd an opportunity to disperse, the indifference of General Dyer to the condition of hundreds of people who were wounded in the firing, the firing of machine-guns into crowds who had dispersed and taken to heels, the flogging of men in public, the order compelling thousands of students to walk 16 miles a day for roll-calls, the arrest and detention of 500 students and professors, the compelling of school-children of 5 to 7 to attend on parade to salute the flag, the order imposing on owners of property the responsibility for the safety of Martial Law posters stuck on their property, the flogging of a marriage party, the censorship of mails, the closure of the Badshahi Mosque for six weeks, the arrest and detention of people without any substantial reason and especially of people who had rendered services to the State in connection with the War Fund or otherwise, the flogging of six of the biggest boys in the Islamiah School, simply because they happened to be schoolboys and big boys, the construction of an open cage for the confinement of arrested persons, the invention of novel punishments like the crawling order, the skipping order and other unknown to any system of law, civil or military, the handcuffing and roping together of persons and keeping them in open trucks for 15 hours, the use of aeroplanes and Lewis guns and the latest paraphernalia of scientific warfare against unarmed citizens, the taking of hostages and the confiscation and destruction of property for the purpose of securing the attendance of absentees, the handcuffing of Hindus and Muhammadans in pairs with the object of demonstrating the

consequences of Hindu-Muslim unity, the cutting off of electric and water supplies from Indian houses, the removal of fans from Indian houses, and giving them for use by Europeans, the commandeering ot all vehicles owned by Indians and giving them to Europeans for use, the feverish disposal of cases with the object of forestalling the termination of Matrial Law, are some of the many incidents of the administration of Martial Law "[22]

On the exposure of these barbarities, public opinion all over India was very much inflamed and universal hatred for British rule firmly implanted itself in the hearts of the people. Gurudev Ravindra Nath Tagore gave vent to the then current feelings of indignation in his famous letter to the Viceroy in which he stated that he was giving voice to the protest of the millions of his countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror, and the time had come when badges of honour made the shame of the countrymen glaring in the incongruous context of humiliation and hence asked to be relieved of his title of knighthood. [23]

The government of India appointed Punjab Disorders Enquiry Committee with Lord Hunter as President and Mr. Justice Bankin, Mr. Rice, General Barrow, Sahibzada Sultan and Sir C Setalved, as members and later on added two non-officials, Mr. Smith of Cawnpore and Hon. Pt. Jagat Narain as members. It commenced its sittings on October 31 at Delhi, sat at Lahore in November and its reports were published on May 28,1920.

The Committee was unfortunately divided upon racial lines and its conclusions were presented in the form of a majority and a minority Reports. Most of the findings of fact were unanimous, and despite difference of opinion as to the conclusions to be deduced therefrom, there was considerable common ground. That common ground covered the whole of the events in Delhi and in the Bombay Presidency as well as as much of the narrative of events and causes of distur-

bances in the Punjab. Certain measures which had been adopted in the suppression of the disturbances were condemned in both Reports, but with varying degrees of severity. This was true in particular of the firing at Jallianwala Bagh. The most important point on which there was an essential difference of opinion related to the introduction of Martial Law in the Punjab. The majority consisting of the President and the English members, believed that a state of rebellion existed, necessitating or justifying the adoption of Martial Law. The Minority, consisting of the Indian Members, believed that the disorders did not amount to rebellion, and that the disturbance might have been suppressed without abrogating the control of the civill authorities. Neither the Majority nor the Minority Reports were in any doubt as to the essential seriousness of the outbreaks. As to the causes of the outbreaks, there was also substantial agreement. The committee next considered the agitation against the Rowlatt Bills. They found that this was largely, if not mainly resposible for creating the feeling against Government which had provoked such serious disorders, and they cited various false rumours as to the provision of the Bill which had inflamed popular feeling. They next examined the history and progress of the satyagraha movement inaugurated by Mr Gandhi on the 24th February, 1919. After a careful review of this movement in all its aspects, the committee found that a familiarity and sympathy with disobedience to laws was engendered by it amongst large numbers of people; and that the law-abiding instincts which stand between society and outbreaks of violence were undermined at a time when their full strength was required ... *The Majority of the Committee concluded by saying that there was no evidence that the outbreak in the Punjab was the result of a pre-arranged conspiracy to overthrow the British Government in India by force, but that it was difficult and probably unsafe for government not to assume*

that the outbreak was the result of a definite organisation. Apart from the existence of any deeply laid scheme to overthrow the British, a movement which had started in rioting and become a rebellion might have rapldiy developed into a revolution. [24]

The main difference between the majority and miniorty reports can be briefly put thus : 1. Whereas the former regarded the outbreak as a rebellion, the latter did not agree that the riots were in the nature of a rebellion or might have rapidly developed into one. Hence, the two differed about the necessity or justification of Martial Law. 2. Whereas the Majority held that the outbreak at Amritsar was anti-government *ab initio*, the minority only found the anti-European sentiments *develop subsequent to the military firing on April 10*. 3. The minority regarded the working of the courts and the methods of arrest highly objectionable whereas the majority broadly approved them.

The Indian National Congress also appointed a sub-committee to inquire into the Punjab tragedies. The Report of the Congress inquiry committee was similar to that of the Minority Report of the Hunter Committee. It characterised the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre as a calculated piece of inhumanity, unparallelled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration. It sought the impeachment and dismissal of O' Dwyer, Dyer, Johnson, O' Brien, Booworth Smith, Sri Ram sub and Malik Sahibkhan.[25]

What concerns us most here is whether there was any organised attempt at rebellion behind these riots, and if any revolutionary organisations were involved in such an attempt. The then Secretary of the Home Department, H. D. Craik, listed four reasons to regard the disturbances as the result of a pre-planned conspiracy to overthrow the Government. They are : 1. Mainly Government buildings are attacked and destroyed ; 2. In a number of places the first acts of the mobs were to cut the telegraph lines, dislocate the railway lines and attack the railway stations. This indicates the concerted effort

to isolate the local police and military forces. 3. The way the disturbances were received by the Ghadar Party in America, and 4. the fact that 'Maro Angrez' shouts were everywhere raised for the first time after the 1857 mutiny.[27] But the secret intelligence report, dated 14 July, 1919, which was cited by Craik, clearly says that 'though the *Ghadr* party are boasting of what a b g thing the *Ghadr* has done (in Punjab), it may be (safely) inferred that *these men are not in communication* with India.'[27] Hence, the glee with which the American Ghadarites greeted the happenings in Punjab was largely based on the ignorance of the true state of affairs. The conspiracy theory seems to be mainly the work of military men in command and it was not adduced immediately after the outbreak but after a considerable period of time, apparently as an afterthought. For example, the telegraphic despatch from the G.O.C., Northern command, Rawalpindi, in connection with the then disturbances in India, dt. 30 April, 1919, harps on the existence of a deeply laid and carefully planned conspiracy to overthrow the British power. But the men in the Home Department, especially C.R. Cleveland could not accept this suggestion and they put it in writing that the theory of widespread and deep conspiracy was not held in responsible quarters in the Puujab[28] The periodical reports of the Punjab government to Home department upto the occurrence of the disturbances show no knowledge of any such conspiracy. Even the Hunter Committee Majority opened that the disorders were more or less spontaneous and quoted the testimony of the D I.G., Punjab, who made a special investigation into their causes, ... "that behind, and beneath the disturbances there was no organisation as could not have been seen by anyone following political development in India during the last few years", in its support.[29] So the safest course is to assume that there seems to be no deep-seated conspiracy behind the riots, but that some revolutionary elements might have taken advantage of the disturbances and in case the riots were to be prolonged and the government repression were to be not so quick and brutal, the then dormant or defunct revolutionary groups and individuals might have been spurred into great activities, would have received immense mass support and might have really created a very critical situation for the rulers.

THE KHILAFAT AND THE NON-CO-OPERATION MOVEMENTS

Strangely, though the Punjab atrocities created a great bitterness among the people of India towards the British rule, it was an altogether different – and for all purposes unconnected with the socio-economic problems of the country – problem that was taken up by Mahatama Gandhi who by this time rose to the pre-eminent position of an undisputed leader of the nation, to launch his famous non-cooperation movement It was the Khilafat problem which greatly agitated the 'souls' of the Indian Muslims who were ever-ready to owe their extra-territorial allegiance to a Khalifa in the person of the Sultan of Turkey. The immediate background was the proposed – and it was almost a certain probability – severance of the Muslim Holy lands of Hedjaj, Palestine, Mesopotamia, etc., i.e., the Jaizrat-Ul-Arab from the Turkish Empire as also the restoration of the European parts of the Turkish Empire to Italy and Greece, by the draft treaty of Sevres. It was tantamount to total dismemberment of the Turkish Empire and this was a shattering blow to the Indian Muslims who from centuries were used to the reading of *Khutba* in the Masjids in the name of the Turkish Khalif and whose Indian Kings and emperors used to owe nominal allegiance to the Turkish sultan. They strongly felt that it was totally contrary to the assurances given by Mr. Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, on January 5, 1918, to the extent that " ... nor are we fighting to deprive Turkey of its Capital or of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace which are predominantly Turkish in race".[30] But they forgot that the above mentioned lands were *not* predominantly Turkish in race and a hasty promise made by an unwise Premier was not likely to be honoured by the other Allied countries. His Highness Agha Khan and some other Muslim representatives went on a deputation to London and also toured Europe to persuade the British and other countries' representatives to save the Khilafat. But the British Premier could not give them any express assurance and they were only too shocked to find their co-Muslims of Arab countries and even the Turk'sh representatives themselves opposed to or at the best lukewarm to

their Pan-Islamic professions But that did not prevent them from spreading anti-British and Pan-Islamic Propaganda at home in India and they only found a too enthusiastic supporter and 'leader' in the person of Gandhi.

It is quite perplexing why Gandhi chose to so zealously take up the problem of Khilafat and make it the central issue of his non-co-operation movement, even overshadowing the much more horrible and heart-rending problem of the Punjab atrocities.

> Whether he saw in the Khilafat movement and seized upon a lever for the overthrow of 'civilised' society – as is maintained by certain of those who are most conscious of the ruin he has wrought to India; whether his own philosophical idealism hailed a kindred spirit in the uncompromising, reason-proof dogmatism of the Khilafat extremists, or whether his undoubted passion for Hindu-Muslim unity led him to embrace, as he himself said, "such an opportunity of uniting Hindus and Muhammadans as would not arise in a hundred years" may well be a matter for dispute. An impartial survey of his activities, both previous and subsequent, suggests that all three motives may have been present to his mind The fact at least is undisputed that he promptly made the Khilafat cause his own, accepted every demand including the least reasonable of the Khilafat party, and hence forward found in Muslims the fighting arm of his campaign against the Government which he stigmatised as 'satanic'. [31]

We cannot but fully concur with this considered opinion of Rushbrook Williams.

We can only point out that Gandhi, not withstanding his high professions of idealism, only acted as a shrewd politician to take advantage of this burning problem of Indian Muslims and alienate a 'fighting race' so firmly set in collusion with the British government till then, from the path of loyalty

to the British crown and bring them onto a war-path. But in his exploiting of the immediate possibilities, he lost sight of the grave consequences of the future and had, perhaps unwittingly, began a course of communalism in politics which struck at the root of any concept of a united Indian nationality He had alienated and antagonised liberal and the then really nationalist Muslim leaders like Mohammed Ali Jinnah, strengthened the current of religious fundamentalism and Pan-Islamic orthodoxy and, it is no exaggeration to say that, had unwittingly sowed the seeds of future partition of India on a religious basis. One cannot also brush aside these anguished words of Alfred Nundy:

> Had Mr. Gandhi set it (the non-co-operation movement–IMS.) in motion in connection with the Punjab affairs in respect to which there was an intense agitation and resentment, or with reference to the Constitutional Reforms, which the nationalist rejected as unsatisfactory, his action would have been not altogether unreasonable. But the one matter he at the very outset complacently dismissed with the remark that the people ought to reconcile themselves to their fate, and as to the other he very wisely advised a co-operation with the government. He pinned his colours to the Turkish flag, and invited all and sundry to rally round it, ignoring the fact that the cause was one in respect to which the Hindus asserted they had no concern, and the Mahomadans as a body could not make up their minds whether they had or not.[32]

Anyway, unreasonable or not, the call for non-co-operation by the Mahatma primarily on the Khilafat question, but with the later addition of the Punjab grievances found a ready and enthusiastic response from the people of India, especially the Muslim masses. Having fervently argued for co-operation with the Government and for the working of Montagu-Chelmsford reforms for whatever worth they had (Gandhi was even against the inclusion of the adjective 'disappointing' to characterize those reforms in the resolution thereof !!), he was flexible enough to switch over to a right-about-turn policy

advocating recourse to non-cooperation by Khilafatites from March, 1920, onwards, and for having actually launched the non-co-operation movement from August 1, 1920. It is true that many Hindu leaders like Malaviya and Swami Sraddhanand too supported the Khilafat agitation but they were naturally restrained in their support, and but for Gandhi, they would not have gone to the extent of launching a non-co-operation movement on that issue. C. R. Das, B. C. Pal, Jinnah and other leaders strongly opposed Gandhi's resolution on Non-co-operation Movement at the special session of the Congress at Calcutta, in September, 1919. But by the time of the Nagpur Congress even C. R. Das switched over to Gandhi's position and the year 1921 was to see the realisation of Gandhi's assurance of 'Swaraj in one year', and the entire country was ablaze with hitherto unprecedented patriotic zeal and nationalist agitation.

NON-CO-OPERATION AND REVOLUTIONARIES

It would be very interesting to inquire into the part played by the Revolutionaries in the Non-Cooperation movement. Since the Defence of India Act came into force from March, 1915, till the end of the war, about 130 persons were detained under Regulation III of 1818 and another 1100 revolutionaries under the D.I Act in Bengal. We should remember that it was in Bengal that the revolutionary movement was quite widespread, and in Punjab and U. P. it seems to have been totally curtailed, if not crushed, by the heavy government repression coming on the heels of the abortive attempts at an uprising on February 19, 1915. Anyway, even those attempts were largely led and inspired by the Bengali revolutionaries. Hence, after the World War ended, it was only the revolutionary groups in Bengal which to any extent maintained their organizations intact though at a much depleted level.

Now the Royal proclamation of December 25, 1919, granted clemency to all political prisoners and Bengal was again infused with the electric fnfluence of a galaxy of prominent revolutionaries belonging to Juganthar and Anushilan groups. But the groups were still at a loss to frame their im-

mediate strategies and programmes of action In this situation, they had to confront the rise, in the Indian political horizon, of an entirely new kind of leader, a non-violent 'revolutionary' in the person of Gandhi. His proposed programme of non-co-operation involving the millions of ordinary people of the land was fraught with great potentialities even for the revolutionaries and they could not afford to ignore it Moreover, their organizational strength and stamina for action being greatly reduced, and the obvious victory of the Allies in the War having greatly enhanced the military capabilities and the repressive might of the British rule, they could not conceive of any immediate programme or armed revolution when their strategies and attempts have failed even when the British empire was in a critical condition.

The revolutionaries were not at all opposed to mass movements and especially movements of passive resistance to the alien government. We have seen how the premier revolutionary organisations in Bengal had sprung up, vigorously grown and quickly spread all over the province during the great 1905–08 Swadeshi movement But what they could not swallow was the cult of non-violence preached by the Mahatma which, to them, seemed a disarming measure in the face of an enemy armed to the teeth. It was a matter of principle with them that the power usurped by the British with the might of the sword could only be seized back with the force of the sword and that there were no examples in history to the contrary. However, they could not sit idle when plans for launching a great country-wide movement were afoot and when especially the masses were being stirred by the charisma of Mahatma Gandhi. Juganthar leaders took the initiative in this matter and important members of the Juganthar organization in North Bengal like Jatin Ray, Abinash Roy, Suresh Banerjee were said to have attended the special session of the Indian National Congress of Calcutta in September, 1920. Again at the Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress in December, 1920, leading personalities of the *Juganthar* group like Jyotish Gosh, Bhupati Mazumdar, Purna Das, Bhupendra Kumar Dutta were in attendance and they were also said to have had a frank discussion about violence as opposed to

non-violence with Gandhi himself. Soon they were said to have been convinced about Gandhiji's ability to stir the masses through his non-cooperation slogan and particularly his pledge of bringing *Swaraj* within one year. They were quite impressed at the prospects of mass participation in the Gandhian movement and were inclined to allow it a fair trial for some time. Finally, they agreed to accept Gandhi's non-violent non-co-operation as a strategy for the time and promised to work with it for one year without resorting to violent methods.[33]

But the rank and file of the revolutionary groups other than Anushilan And the Anushilan group as a whole, were still not impressed with the policy of non-violence and while they did not indulge in any violent actions during the non-co-operation period, they did not show much enthusiasm either. The Bengal political situation was such that no party could do anything without the support and active participation of the revolutionaries and hence, when Gandhi and other Congress Working Committee members were staying as guests to Deshabandhu C. R. Das in September, 1921, C. R. Das availed of the opportunity to arrange a secret conference between the Mahatma and the revolutionaries. We have this on the authority of Subhas Chandra Bose :

> Many of them [the revolutionaries] did not approve of the doctrine of non-retaliation which they apprehended would demoralise the people and weaken their power of resistance. There was a possibility that the ex-revolutionaries as a class would go against the Congress owing to ideological differences .. Deshabandhu C. R Das was anxious to disarm the hostility of the ex-revolutionaries and, if possible, to win their active support for the Congress campaign. He, therefore, arranged a conference in September between them and the Mahatma, at which he was also present. The ex-revolutionaries had a heart-to-heart talk with the Mahatma and he and the Deshabandhu tried to convince them that non-violent, non-co-operation, instead of weakening or demoralising the people,

would strengthen their power of effective resistance. The upshot of the conference was that all those present promised to give a full chance to the Congress to strive for Swaraj and promised to do nothing to hamper its work, while many of them agreed to join the Congress organisation as loyal and active members [34]

The Juganthar group is said to have had fully kept its promise while the attitude of the Anushilan party was not that clear. The leader of the Anushilan Samiti, Pulin Das, was said to have started a *Bharath Sevak Sangha* in 1920, and to have joined hands with the *citizen s protection league*, an organisation of Europeans and loyalist Indians to oppose the Non-co-operation Movement. Pulin Das also brought out few issues of a leaflet named *Haq Katha* (the true story) denouncing the imbecile ideas of non-violence and preaching against the Non-Co-operation movement. Behind the facade of militancy, Pulin Das and others were said to have been serving British interests and most probably receiving British funds too. But many honest members of the Anushilan were said to have opposed Pulin Das' stand and joined the mass agitation of Congress. By the end of 1922, Pulin Das was said to have been ousted from leadership by the younger sections of the Anushilan, [35]

This version as well as David Laushey's attribution of the publishing of *Haq Katha* to the Anushilan party as a whole,[36] was vehemently rejected by Sri Dinesh Chandra Ghatak, the General Secretary, Anushilan Samiti 75 Anniversary Celebration Committee. He said that despite protracted and intense discussion between Gandhiji and Pulin Das on the question of violence vs. non-violence, neither could convince the other. Pulin Das differed on a matter of principle and he brought out *Haq Katha* to defend those principles and had absolutely no connection with the British agents. As soon as this created embarrassment to the Anushilan party, he stopped it on his own and it is not at all true that he was ousted from the leadership. He voluntarily stepped down and gave the younger elements all encouragement and help afterwards.[37] The official history of the Anushilan Samiti also rejects these two

versions and stresses that most of the members of the Anushilan threw themselves whole-heartedly into the Non-Co-operation movement, and that in 1921 many leading members of the Samiti held important positions in various District Congress Commitrees and that a large number of Anushilan members courted imprisonment. But it evades the disconcerting story of the publication of *Haq Katha* by Pulin Das and the alleged flow of funds from dubious sources for its publication.[38] So we may again refer to what Subhas Bose says and concur with him that,

> As a matter of fact, a section of them [ex-revolutionaries] had already started propaganda in Bengal against the Non-Co-operation movement. Strangely enough, funds had been provided by the British mercantile community under the name of the citizens' protection League. The money was distributed through the medium of an Indian advocate *who did not disclose the source* of funds.[39]

Anyhow, this much is certain that an overwhelming majority of the revolutionaries belonging to both the Juganthar and the Anushilan and also other revolutionary groups, with or without reservations, had jumped into the fray of the non-co-operation movement, and it is chiefly due to their activities that the non-co-operation movement in Bengal could rise to a high pitch. But even while working within the Congress, the Bengal revolutionaries generally, barring a few like Shyam Sunder Charkrabarty, were said to have been keen on re-grouping and re-organising their respective secret societies. There was a greater understanding at this point between the *Juganthar* and the *Anushilan* who were otherwise at loggerheads with each other. The non-co-operation movement was said to have suspended but not abolished the creed of violence and its organizations. The Chandernagore group under Motilal Roy with close links with the Anushilan, the two Chittagong groups—the main group under Surjya Sen and the other under Charu Bikash Dutta, the powerful North Bengal Juganthar groups under the leadership of Kalipada Bagchi and Jotin Roy, all were said to have followed this dual policy of supporting

and actively participating in the non-co-operation movement while at the same time recruiting active cadres for their secret societies from among the militant youth thrown up by the movement, and strengthening their respective organizations to meet future necessities. The Congress volunteer organisations in almost all parts of Bengal set up to work for the non-co-operation movement, were said to have been dominated by the people who believed in violent resistance.[40] According to a report compiled by the Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India,

> In 1921, the terrorists, who had begun to reorganise, exploited the Non-Co-operation movement to the full for the purpose of recruitment, and deliberately set about capturing the Congress in Bengal ... The terrorists, now freedom from restraint [i.e., due to the suspension of the Civil Disobedience Movement by Gandhiji following the Chauri Chaura incident] were content to watch the developments while utilising every opportunity (such as the volunteer movement) for drawing their followers together and extending their influence...... This penetration of the Congress machine had very important consequences, for it helped the terrorist party internally in the matter of recruitment and organisation, and externally in the matter of public sympathy. Penetration was so rapid that in 1924 the terrorists were in a position to compel the Bengal Provincial Congress to put through a resolution eulogising one Gopi Mohan Saha who was executed for assassinating a certain Mr. Day of Calcutta in mistake for Sir Charles Tegart, the Commissioner of Police.[41]

The revolutionaries in other provinces too, took a similar course of action, but were not rewarded with that success in capturing the Congress machinery which fell to the lot of their Bengali comrades. Sri Manmathnath Gupta who had developed links with the revolutionary movement in Benares by 1920, also courted imprisonment in the non-co-operation movement. The case of Chandrasekhar Azad who started as a boy-volunteer of

the Non Co-operation movement, dauntlessly bearing the acute pain of 'fifteen baenths' (stripes) shouting 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai' after every beating, and rose to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army to court martyrdom in a heroic encounter with the police, is now known to one and all. Similarly, many revolutionaries of Punjab did participate in the non-violent non-co-operation and Akali movements there.

It is curious to note that though the revolutionaries everywhere refrained from overt violent activities during the non-co-operation movement, the Khilafat problem, about which we have dealt with at great length and which inspired a fanatic zeal among the Indian Muslims, was responsible for a serious armed outbreak in Malabar (with fateful consequences) even during the high period of the non-co-operation movement and within a few months after the suspension of movement following the Chauri Chaura tragedy, another armed rebellion broke out among the tribal people in the Agency tracts of the then province of Madras It is quite curious to note that both these armed rebellions broke out in South India which was generally free from revolutionary activities in the past. We will discuss at length about these two rebellions in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER V

ARMED REBELLIONS IN THE SOUTH

In this chapter, we will deal at some length with the two armed rebellions that successively occurred in South India within a period of three years from 1921-24, and also, with the question of Khilafat (mainly the relations between Gandhiji and Ali brothers in the context of the Khilafat movement of those days) which is so central to the outbreak of the first of these two, i. e., the Moplah rebellion.

MAHATMA GANDHI AND THE ALI BROTHERS

In the last chapter we have seen how Gandhi made the Khilafat question central to his non-co-operation movement and only later added the Punjab tragedies as another cause for the same. In fact this idea of non-co-operation was mooted by Gandhi as early as on November 23, 1919, at the All-India Khilafat conference at Delhi to which he was elected President. From that time a strange alliance devoloped between the Hindu Gandhi and the Muslim Ali brothers which spurred the nation to a mighty non-co-operation movement and thus created a far-reaching national consciousness in almost every nook and corner of the country in a short term. But the same time it resulted in fateful consequences in the long term. The Pan-Islamic fundamentalism given a certificate of approval by even the Hindus of India, in the long term only increased Muslim seperatist tendencies within India and eventually resulted in the much lamented partition of the subcontinent and the consequent horrible atrocities during the partition riots. More immediately, soon after the suspension in March, 1922, of the civil disobedience movement by the Mahatma, this Islamic fundamentalism resulted in a series of serious riots between Hindus and Muslims at various places in

India. But what is more important to note is that this whipping-up of Islamic religious frenzy led to a serious outbreak among the fanatic Mappillahs (Moplahs) of Malabar who perpetrated untold atrocities on the Hindus there and thus caused a serious breach to the much boasted Hindu-Muslim unity even while the non-co-operation movement was running at full steam. So, here it would be worthwhile to deal with some details regarding the strange alliance between Mahatma Gandhi and the Maulana brothers.

When the Ali brothers were in their phase of support to the British Empire and in opposition to the Indian National Congress, they turned a blind eye to the fate of their Muslim brethern in Tripoli, etc., who were the victims of European aggressions They stressed on the then 'plight' of the Muslim masses in India and the need to do everything to bring them up.[1] They were averse to any co-operation with the Congress which they held to be a predominantly Hindu organisation.[2] Only in 1913, the Ali brothers changed their line of absolute loyalty to the British Crown and bitter opposition to the Indian National Congress (and the Hindus) largely due to Pan-Islamic consideration.[3] They along with other eminent Muslim league leaders (with the possible exception of Jinnah), deliberately utilized the respect and reverence cherished by the Indian Muslims towards the Sultan of Turkey for their own cause of the Pan-Islamic movement and by forging unity among themselves on that basis, they endeavoured to make the Muslims a great political power in India[4] The allegiance of the Ali brothers to non-violence was, at the best, quite temporary and tactical. In fact, it was only a thin disguise to cover up their own violent intentions. They declared themselves to be Muslims first and Indians next and strangely Gandhi also endorsed their ideas!![5] According to them, the *Koran* directed them to use the sword when necessary to kill the enemies of the religion and they had only sheathed it for the time-being. That this was no isolated opinion of the Ali Brothers but was widely shared by other Muslim leaders of the day can be seen from these words of Maulana Hasrat Mohani:

> I on my part, fear that in general the reply to Martial Law will be, what is commonly called, Guerrilla Warfare, or *in the words of the Koran, "Kill them wherever you find them."* The responsibility for all this bloodshed will rest on the shoulders of the Government.[6]

We can safely conclude that even the professions of Hindu-Muslim unity by Muslim leaders, especially the Ali brothers was only a tactical move designed as a temporary expedient Sumit Sarkar seems to be extremely ignorant of the true situation prevailing then as well as of the Moslem or the Hindu religious traditions when he asserts that,

> Khilafat leaders were extremely eager for Hindu-Muslim unity ... This eagerness was reflected by the December 1919 Muslim League resolution calling for the giving-up of the Bakr-Id slaughter of cows. It is noteworthy that Hindu leaders then or later on, never offered the obvious *quid pro quo* of abandoning music before mosques, even though the latter was hardly an indispensable part oi Hinduism while Bakr-Id was a central religious function.[7]

First of all, it was the *unconditional* support for the religious demand of Khilafat of the Indian Muslims by the Hindu leaders like Malaviya and Swami Sraddhanand (not to speak of Gandhi), that prompted this conciliatory gesture by the Muslim League. Secondly, even the President of the then Muslim League conference, Hakim Ajmal Khan, explained to his fellow-Muslims that slaughter of cows was not obligatory or indispensable according to Koranic traditions (whereby the camel, goat and the mule were recommended for sacrifice in order of preference). Finally, can Sumit Sarkar cite a single Hindu religious procession where playing of music is dispensable.

Anyway, the thin disguise of non-violence and Hindu-Muslim unity worn by the Muslim leaders started falling off even during the non-co-operation movement as indicated by

the tragic Moplah rebellion in Malabar. Even at the height of the non-co-operation movement there were several national leaders and activists who did not take the professions of non-violence by the Ali brothers at their face-value. In fact, there was a joke widely current in those days regarding the strange friendship between the Ali brothers and Gandhi. Gandhi and the Ali brothers were said to consume a goat a day between themselves, the former its milk and the latter its flesh and bones ! !

Here we should further mention that after the failure of the non-co-operation movement the Ali brothers parted ways with the Mahatma. Subhas Bose states that the unique position achieved by the Ali brothers as national leaders during that period was largely due to the propaganda conducted in their favour by the Mahatma. But he also does not find fault with the latter for his intimate association with them. The real mistake in his opinion lay not in connecting the Khilafat issue with the other national issues, but in allowing the Khilafat committee to be set up as an independent organization. He avers that it was due to this fault that when the Khilafat question lost all its meaning due to Mustafa Kamal Pasha of Turkey himself abolishing the Khilafat, the members of that body were absorbed by sectarian, reactionary and pro-British Muslim organisations. Otherwise (if Khilafatites were urged to join the Congress without setting up an independent organization), the nationalist forces would have largely benefited even after the Khilafat question ceased to be.[8] Unfortunately, we cannot agree with him on this count and feel that the very step of espousing the cause of Khilafat as a national cause was a great blunder primarily on the part of the Mahatma, but also on the part of other Congress leaders too.

THE MOPLAH REBELLION

The Moplahs (i.e., Mappillas) are

> ...a race of sturdy, independent-minded, supremely religious Mahomedans, said to be descendants of Arab traders and pirates who used to infest the Indian ocean in early times, now inhabiting the hill and

jungle tracts of southern Malabar in the vicinity of Calicut.[9]

This supreme religiosity may be taken as a euphemism for the religious fanaticism of these Mappillas who were highly suspestitious, hopelessly ignorant and miserably poor.

> The Mappillas are particularly susceptible to the inflammatory preachings of their high priest called Mambram Taramal Tangal, whose sway over them is complete. 'They regarded him', says a report, 'as imbued with a portion of divinity. They swear by his feet as their most solemn oath. Earth on which he had spat or walked is treasured up.' ..[10]

They had always been a thorn in the side of the British and frequently marred the peace and tranquillity of the district by their violent outbreaks from time to time, ever since 1836. Three main causes – poverty, agrarian discontent and religious fanaticism are said to be behind these outbreaks; but out of these three, the third appears to be the most important. Though their outbreaks were necessarily anti-British since the British occupied and ruled that part of the country since the first decades of the nineteenth century, in reality the chief victims of their atrocities and deprivations were the local Hindus of *all* classes; and the Mappillas in almost every outbreak sought to increase the ranks of the followers of Islam by forcible conversions on the pain of death and considerably succeeded in their such aggressions.

> Leading a miserable state here on earth, the Mappillas are easily fascinated by the wondrous joy and blessed life in paradise Their frenzied bravery and preparedness for death to enter into the 'blessed world' by their violent Zehad is some thing unimaginable. It almost passes belief. The sahids or saints predestinate, prepare for death. They set their houses in order; divorce their wives and clad in the white robes of the martyrs go out to die fighting against the Unbeliever. "No words can depict." says Sir Henry Winter Botham, "the abject terror of the Hindus of

> all ranks and classes when a gang af Mappilla fanatics is on the war-path. An invasion by a hostile army could not cause more consternation or a greater panic". With rare exceptions these outbreaks have always blazed out within a radius of some fifteen miles from Pandalur hill in the Ernad Taluk, the 'fanatical zone' in Malabar.[11]

The animosities and conflicts between the Hindus and Mappillas were further aggravated by the very economic reason that most of the Mappillas were tenants working on disadvantageous terms under Hindu 'Jenmis'. However, as we will see later, this was at best a 'contributory' and not a 'genetic' cause.

The Mappilla outbreaks since 1836 can be broadly categorized into two phases. The first, up to the outbreak of World War I, was largely due to religious fanaticism inflamed by the agrarian discontent. But the second phase, starting from 1915 and ending with the most formidable and abhorrable outbreak of 1921–22, is largely due to religious fanaticism inflamed by political considerations. With the outbreak of the First World War and Turkey's embroilment in it on the side of the Central Powers, Mappillas somehow began to cherish a widespread belief that the British Rule was coming to an end. The first outbreak in this second phase broke out in February-March, 1915.

> This arose out of a case in which a Hindu boy was kidnapped and converted to Islam. The boy was restored by the authorities to his relatives and his abductor was convicted and sentenced to fine. Apparently, the local Mappillas were satisfied but those further off, misled by rumour, resented what they conceived to be an insult to Islam. Fanatical feeling was aroused and the outbreak started with an attempt on the District Magistrate's life which failed. Arrangements had been previously concerted to deal with the outbreak and measures were at once taken to isolate the fanatics and after a search they retreated into a temple, where, in customary fashion, they determined to die. After

a fight the temple was taken and four men were found dead and a fifth injured. ... In this case .. fanaticism was the root of the trouble, and there was considerable excitement among the Mappillas aroused by war rumours.[12]

The second outbreak was in 1919 in which

... some youths led by Purapurath Valiacheck Haji, a man of 65 years who had previously been in the Police, murdered several Hindus for no reason except Muslim fanaticism The gang were rounded up by the police in a farm house and all shot [13]

The immediate cause for the outbreak of the most formidable, most abhorrable and the last ever Moplah rebellion of 1921–22, is not sufficiently clear. No doubt there was some agrarian trouble also at the root, but the whole tenor of the rebellion only testifies to the predominance of religious fanaticism. Again whether the agrarian trouble was the immediate cause ensuing in a riot which gradually developed into armed rebellion or whether it was only a pretext to start some riots in pursuance of an already hatched-out plan for open rebellion is also not that clear. The Government reports, as also the version of the noted historian R. C. Mazumdar and that of Mrs. Annie Besant [See *Appendix No. 3*], all lend credence to the latter surmise and I also tend to agree with it. But what is indisputable is that the Khilafat and Non-Co-operation movements had inspired (or inflamed) the Mappillas to a very high pitch and they only took the first occassion to rise in rebellion to proclaim a Khilafat Raj and perpetrate the consequent (foul) deeds and face serious consequences for their misdeeds. Here is what the official history of Mappilla outbreaks says:

It was the direct outcome of the Khilafat agitation and the non-co-operation movement. The outbreak of the world war and the fight against the Turks had already created much hostilities and contempt among the Mappillas against the British government in India. A wave of discontent and unrest was sweeping over the entire region. Now it was augmented by

> the violent preachings of the Khilafat agitators and members of non-co operation movement. Both Muslim and Congress leaders like Shaukat Ali, Gandhiji and others, toured the area and addressed the masses. The speeches did immense mischief by appealing to the Muslim prejudices of the Mappillas. For example, they said at a mass meeting at Calicut that if the Mappillas were strong enough they ought to fight and, if too weak, they should emigrate rather than continue under the British Raj. By February 1921, the results of almost unchecked agitation both by Hindus and Muslims, were sufficiently disquieting Besides this there was volunteer movement and the carrying of arms ... The volunteers preached that Amir of Afghanistan would come to overthrow the British government, that the Mappillas should help Gandhi and Ali brothers and that Government officers should be done away with. ... ...
>
> Incidents significant of coming real trouble occurred at the end of July and the beginning of August. There were threatening demonstrations from Mappilla crowds on two occassions when the authorities wanted to arrest some persons . in cases of theft and mal-treatment of Tiyyans. ... ... There were signs also such as the making of special knives and preparing themselves for 'Jehad'.
>
> It was decided that an attempt should be made to nip the trouble in the bud by a surprise raid on Thirurangadi and its neighbourhood to effect the arrest of 24 known ring-leaders. The raid was fixed for the 20th August and was only partially successful. [14]

So it is clear that the district authorities were fore-warned by their Intelligence agencies of a probable outbreak and in order to 'nip it in the bud' embarked on the raid on Thirurangadi. The point is, was it only a 'complex' peasant movement provoked by the atrocities of the Hindu 'Jenmies' (with

all the government backing), taking to the desperate course of armed rebellion. It is held by some that :

> From 1916 onwards the Malabar Tenants' Association, representing the landed gentry, had been holding village meetings in Ernad and Walluvanad which probably influenced the Moplah peasants. The Khilafat agitation received the support of the Moplah leaders that included Ali Musaliyar who had spent seven years in Mecca. It seems that some of the Thangals and the Hajis became prominent in the Khilafat agitation. The Moplah rebellion of 1921 had considerable peasant support; in Ernad and Walluvanad, Moplah Raj was established ; in the face of severe repression the Moplahs tried to organise guerrilla warfare which achieved limited success At this point the Moplahs attacked and killed the hindus ...[15]

This version tries to lay stress on the peasant aspect of the rebellion but apart from stating that it had considerable peasant support, there is nothing else to indicate that it was not primarily a religious fanatic outburst. That Hindus were killed only at a later stage is not correct.

Another version identifies the conflict between the rich landlords (of Nilambur) and the poor, (Moplah) tenants as one of the root-causes which led to a troubled situation in the area around Thirurangadi. This troubled state was said to have been exploited by the religious fanatics who spread false stories about the Khilafat agitation and the N C M. The repression by the British authorities only inflamed the Moplahs further and the rebellion broke out on 20 August, 1921, when the British forces raided Thirurangadi and surrounded the mosque there to apprehend some priests. On the 21st, Nilambur palace was attacked, 13 Hindus slaughtered, the records burnt and within the next four days many police stations in the neighbourhood attacked, court-buildings set on fire and Hindu temples desecrated. This version, however, admits that a Khilafat Raj was proclaimed, Hindu temples were desecrated and forcible conversions reported *even before* the declaration of Martial Law on 26 August, 1921. [16]

Hence, it is clear that anti-Hindu fanaticism in addition to the anti-zamindar hatred had run amok even before a form of Martial Law was declared. It is also clear that a Khilafat kingdom was declared within one or two days of the fateful happenings at Thirurangadi, and it is naturally quite doubtful whether any basically agrarian trouble could develop so soon into a rebellion for an Islamic state. The official version seems to be more credible though it suffers from one lacuna, that it does not explicitly mention that some agrarian problems were also at the root of the trouble. For example, the Government version regarding the spreading of the messages that the Amir of Afghanistan would come to overthrow the British regime, need not be brushed aside as a sheer invention. All over India wild rumours were current at that time that the Amir of Afghanistan was going to invade India at the invitation of the Indian Muslims. Whatever be the real truth behind these rumours, the attitude of Muhammad Ali regarding this point was most revealing. He said that

> ... if the Afghans invaded India to wage a holy war, the Indian Muhammadans are not only bound to join them but also to fight the Hindus if they refuse to co-operate with them. [17]

A leading Muslim politician of that time, Choudhary Khaliquazzaman, is said to have confirmed in his book 'Pathway to Pakistan' (Lahore, 1961) that the Indian Muslims tried to enlist the support of the Amir of Afghanistan and opened negotiations with him for that purpose. Sri R. C. Mazumdar quotes from some confidential reports of the government as well as from Ambedkar's book 'Pakistan' to further substantiate this point [18] But what is most interesting is Gandhi's reaction to the agitated feelings among the Hindu nationalist leaders. In the *Young India*, of 4 May, 1921, Gandhi is reported to have said :

> I would rather see India perish at the hands of Afghans than purchase freedom from Afghan invasion at the cost of her honour. To have India defended by an unrepentant Government that keeps the Khilafat and the Punjabi wounds still bleeding, is to sell India's honour. [19]

If one intelligently reads between the lines, the conclusion would be obvious that Gandhi was not oblivious to, if already not a party to, the plans of Indian Muslims to enlist the Afghan support and had decided to help the 'proposed invasion' by his canvassing Hindu co-operation at least by way of non-co-operation towards the British Indian government. Perhaps that was also the cause why Gandhi was not so much perturbed in his conscience by the violent misdeeds of 'brave and God-fearing Moplahs!'

To proceed with the official version –

> The news of arrests coupled with the spread of false rumours of desecration of the famous Mambram mosque brought great crowds of Mappillas into clash with the authorities. Mr Rowley of the police and Lt Johnstone of the Leinsters were cut down while parleying with the crowd and apart from the fighting there were several deliberate murders of police messengers and motor drivers. The District Magistrate handed over control to the Senior officer present. *As if at a pre-arranged signal, the railway lines were torn up, telegraph wires cut, stations attacked and attempts made to destroy bridges.* There were rebel activities up to within six miles of Calicut. The district was for a time cut off from communication with the out side world and with a large Mappilla population at Calicut, the situation itself was far from reassuring. Ali Musaliyar had arrogated to himself the title of "King" at Tirurangadi and at Pandikad, the local Khilafat ring-leaders divided the country into [various regions of] 'Khilafat kingdom' and appointed "rulers". Disorder rapidly spread through Ernad, Waluvanad and Ponnani taluks and between 21st and 25th August most of the public offices were attacked, police stations looted of their arms, many Hindu houses were dacoited and their inhabitants ill-treated or murdered ; ... ... most of the main roads blocked with trees and bridges and culverts broken down. The murder of Hindus for refusal to accept Islam were,

however, more frequent from September onwards, when troops were already operating against the various gangs into which the rebels broke up. *In early stages of the rebellion a small number of Hindus,* mostly agitators, had actually joined up with the Mappillas.

A form of Martial law was declared for the area, a military commander appointed with a special civil officer attached and a movable column sent from Bangalore. Another column stationed at Calicut went to retake Mallapuram. On the way, at Pukkottur it was attacked by a furious mob of 1000 rebels with all sorts of arms. *The Mappillas came on determined to die and no less than 400 were killed* before the relieving column could make its way to Malapuram. On 25th August 1921, H.M.S. "Comus" arrived at Calicut from Ceylon on the request of the Government to protect the town from the rebels. The first Bangalore regiment reached Malapuram. Soon another column was sent. Both of them met at Tirurangadi. A battle took place, several rebels were killed and their leader Ali Musaliyar surrendered... [20]

But the Mappilla rebellion continued with several gangs under V. Kunhamed Haji and others taking to guerrilla warfare. Many armed convoys were ambushed and some casualties were caused among the government forces. The total strength of these wandering gangs was reported to be around 10,000 and as they get more desperate, dacoities, forced conversions and murders became more brutal and freguent.

In the interior of Palghat and Mannarghat, the rebels continued their reign of terror, with pillage and arson committed everywhere, especially in East Ernad, where Kunhamad Haji declared himself as an independent sovereign. At Alanallur, near Manarghat, a serious skirmish occurred between the reble gang and the British troops. A Moplah conference was held in which a *jehad* was declared, and Hindus who did

not actively help them were reported to have been forcibly converted. The trouble raged on for months, the rebels raising their head again, as soon as marching columns of British troops had gone by. [21]

However, sustained military operations and raids by the Malabar special force, Gorkhas etc , broke the back of the rebellion and by January, 1922, the rebellion broke down and died a natural death within a short time.

It required practically two full brigades of infantry with transport and wireless details and detachments of sappers and miners and 700 special police to suppress the rebellion. The active part played by the Mappilla women deserves notice. Two are known to have been shot in actual fighting and 157 were known to have taken part in definite offences, chiefly dacoities and thefts. [22]

Special courts were set up. Court Martials employed in case of rebel leaders, and as many as 45,000 rebels and the supporters were reported to be taken prisoners. Hundreds of long-term convicts were transpoted to the Andamans.

The total number of reported murders was 468, dacoities 5041, arson 852. *Three hundred and twenty Hindu temples were destroyed and in Ernad taluk alone 900 cases of forced conversion to Islam were reported.* [23]

A great tragedy marked the end of the rebellion.

The measures adopted by governmet for the suppression of this formidable rebellion were generally approved, and provoked few complaints even in the most violent section of the Indian press. There was however one distressing occurrence, namely, the death by asphyxiation on the night of November 19th, 1921, of some 70 prisoners who were being conveyed by train from the disturbed areas to Bellary for incarceration. This incident was made the subject of a special inquiry ... and meanwhile compassionate allo-

wances were made to the families and dependents of the unfortunate rebels [24]

Sumit Sarkar is rightly angered by, and seriously condemns, this Podanur train tragedy describing it as more gruesome than the Sirajud-daulah's (so-called) Black Hole tragedy. We also share with his anger and concur with his comments, but only point out that this was quite unlike the Jallianwallah Bagh tragedy and before this fateful asphyxiation occurred many trainloads of Moplah prisoners were sent in sealed goods vans with not much damage to their health. This particular mishap seems to be due more to the callousness of the subordinate officials which is quite understandable in a Martial Law region, than due to any deliberate sadism on the part of higher authorities.

Be that as it may, the atrocities perpetrated by the Moplahs on their fellow-Hindus was many times more horrible and *all classes* of Hindus were victimized. It had become a fashion among the so-called 'leftist' historians in India to support any and every minority movement, cloak minority communalism in the guise of rightful struggle against oppression, and blame the majority community or cold-shoulder it even where it is patently wronged. Sumit Sarkar is no exception to this fashion when he says that about 600 Hindus were killed and some 2500 forcibly converted (according to an Arya Samajist source), but remarks that these figures are really rather low – considering the facts that the 'fanatics' controlled for months an area inhabited by four lakh Hindus including many oppressive landlords and money lenders, and numerous collaborators with the British. He also stresses the central fact of a massive and armed anti-imperialist revolt, the bloody suppressions of which left 2337 rebels killed, 1652 wounded, and no less than 45,402 prisoners. [25] We can only remark that it is *highly unwise* on the part of a 'renowned' historian to put the figure of 600 Hindus killed as low taking into consideration that – 1. The rebels never had complete control over any area for more than a week; 2 the rebels since September were always on the run; 3. They did not possess sophis-

ticated arms like General Dyer's soldiers at Jallianwallah Bagh ; and 3. it is ludicrous to assume that Hindus would not try to put up collective self-defence wherever possible in view of the impending holocaust. If we take into consideration the above factors, one can only put the figures as too high (it's quite doubtful whether in the whole course of the 1946–51 Telangana armed struggle 600 landlords and their henchmen were killed) and since it will be superfluous to relate all the blood curdling atrocities of Moplahs referred to by Sri R. C. Mazumdar, we will limit ourserves here to quoting brief extracts from some other sources.

First of all, I would like to stress the fact that a resolution was passed in the Palghat conference of Malabar Congress in 1924,

> ... expressing sorrow on the occurrence of the Moplah rebellion, and condemning the inhuman atrocities like the thousands of murders, (block) religious conversions, etc., that had taken place during the rebellion ; expressing also the condolences of the conference to the innocent victims who had suffered during the rebellion under the hands of the rebels, the police and the Army.[26]

As late as in April 1927, Sri K. Madhavan Nair, M. L. C. and chairman of the Reception committee of the 3rd political conference of the Malabar Congress held at Calicut, said in his welcome address that,

> ...with the hardhships caused by the rebels to the people and to the rebels by the Army and the police, life in Malabar has become hard and sorrowful. It has upset all social and political work in the district. Those who were sympathetic towards the Congress and the Khilafat organizations in Malabar were now afraid even to look at these organisations, because many innocent people have been sent to jail or hanged on the pretext that they were Congressmen and Khilafat

workers and had helped, the rebels in these atrocious activities.[27]

Here we should contrast it with the Rampa Rebellion in the Andhra Agency which instead gave a great fillip to the national movement in Andhra.

The All India Liberal Federation in its conference at Allahabad held in December, 1921, strongly condemned the Moplah rebellion and expressed its profound abhorrence of the atrocities committed by the Moplahs. The Congress session at Ahmedabad in December, 1921, expressed,

> ... its firm conviction that the Moplah disturbance was not due to the Non-co-operation or the Khilafat movement, especially as the non-co-operators and the Khilafat preachers were denied access to the affected parts by the District authorities for six months before the disturbance but is due to causes wholly unconnected with the two movements and that the outbreak would not have occurred had the message of non-violence been allowed to reach them. Nevertheless this Congress deplores the acts done by certain Moplahs by way of forcible conversions and destruction of life and property and is of opinion that the prolongation of the disturbance in Malabar could have been prevented by the Government of Madras accepting the proferred assistance of Maulana Yakub Hassan and other non-co-operators and allowing Mahatma Gandhi to proceed to Malabar and is further of opinion that the treatment of Moplah prisoners as evidenced by the asphyxiation incident was an act of inhumanity unheard of in modern times and unworthy of a Government that calls itself civilised.[28]

No need remarking that this resolution was highly dubious and did not do sufficient justice to the unfortunate victims of the Moplah atrocities Gandhi's position was the strangest since the killing of so many Hindus, forcible conversions, etc., as well as the great violence of the rebellion and repression alike, did not seem to have unnerved this

'gentle' soul who mysteriously was quite agitated over the loss of '22' (only twenty two) lives of policemen at Chauri Chaura a few months later and chose to suspend a great movement for this local flare-up. He only spoke of the brave God-fearing Moplahs fighting for what they considered as religious! Certainly it is impossible to understand 'Mahatmas' (great souls)!!

After this, it is needless to blame either the Muslim League or the Khilafat conference for the 'soft corner' displayed by them towards the Moplah rebels. Anyway we are tempted to quote from Maulana Hasrat Mohani's Presidential Address at the 14th session of the All India Muslim League, Ahmadabad, on 30 December, 1921 :

> You are probably aware that Hindu India has an open and direct complaint against the Moplahs and an indirect complaint against all of us that the Moplahs are plundering and spoiling their innocent Hindu neighbours. But you are probably not aware that the Moplahs justify their action on the ground that at such a critical juncture, when they are engaged in a war against the English, their neighbours not only do not help them and observe neutrality but aid and assist the English in every possible way. They can no doubt contend that while they are fighting a defensive war for the sake of their religion and have left their houses, property and belongings and taken refuge in hills and jungles, it is unfair to characterise as plunder their commandeering of the money, provision and other necessities for their troops, from the English and their supporters [20] [!!]

It is strange for one to ask support for a cause which is espoused by one-third of the population of Malabar only and which is patently against the religion of the other two-thirds. It is significant that the 'brave' Moplahs opted for a *Khilafat Raj* and not *Swaraj* which was the call of Hindu-Muslim unity as embodied in the Congress resolution. It is still strange as to how anybody can support mass rapes, widespread desecration and destruction of Hindu temples and

forcible conversion (*en masse*) in the name of either commandeering of money, provisions etc., for the 'army of Allah' or in the name of a basically anti-feudal agrarian struggle !!

We are also tempted to quote Sri Sankaran Nair :

> ... more than two thousand Mohamadans killed by the troops according to official estimates, thousands more in other ways; far larger numbers wounded; the number of Hindus butchered in circumstance of barbarity, flayed alive, made to dig their own graves before slaughter, running into thousands; women and purdah women too, raped, not in a fit of passion, but systematically for months, passed from hand to hand and with calculated revolting and horrible cruelty for which I have not been able to find a parallel in history. Thousands were forcibly converted. All this done in the name of, and to enforce, the Khilafat movement; all this due directly to the visit of Gandhi and Shaukat Ali and to the organization of Khilafat associations [30]

We feel it necessary to counter the propaganda that Moplahs were compelled by force of circumstances to kill and loot Hindus once their rebellion had started and originally they had no such motive. R. C. Mazumdar quotes from a confidential report of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India :

> A Khilafat Ulema conference had been held at Ponnani about the middle of July at which highly exciting speeches, followed by clear suggestions for the proclamation of a republic in the event of a hostile British attitude towards Angora provided the requisite torch to the inflammatory and fanatical Moplahs. [31]

In the same conference Moplah leaders were said to have made rabid communal speeches from which the following excerpts are quoted :

> We have extorted swaraj from the white man. ... We shall give Hindus the option of death or Islam. We

> have the example of the Holy Prophet that it is a good act to kill for God's work.
>
> The Jews and Christians, as believers in revealed book, may we tolerate, but the idolatrous Hindu can only be allowed to live in a Muslim state on sufferances. ... The time for establishing the Khilafat has come [32]

Of course, these professions were carried into practice later on to the best of their abilities

To sum up, the rebellion of the 'brave and God-fearing' Moplahs cannot be said to be a part and parcel of the national movement for independence. On the contrary, it was clearly against the general nationalist trend and at the best may be described as an anti-Hindu, Muslim fanatic rebellion. Strange though it may seem, it was the British who saved the national interests of India by their bloody suppression of this horrible rebellion.

THE CHAURI CHAURA TRAGEDY AND THE SUSPENSION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Mention here must be made of the Chauri Chaura outbreak and the consequent suspension of the civil disobedience movement by Gandhiji since these two events, particularly the latter one, was responsible for the disenchantment of a great number of non-co-operators with the policy of non-violence and was a reminder to the already revolutionary-minded sections to thenceforth take to the path of the sword again. On 5 February, 1922, in a small village called Chauri Chaura, near Gorakhpur, far away in U. P., furious masses provoked by unjust police highhandedness and unwarranted firings, attacked the local police station and set fire to it with the members of the police force inside (who locked themselves inside). When the police force was forced to come outside, all of them, twenty-two in number, were cut to pieces and their bodies thrown into the flames. This great cruelty in the course of a movement strictly expected to be on non-violent lines at once

struck the headlines everywhere and Mahatma Gandhi was horrified. He at once convened the Congress Working Committee meeting at Bardoli and influenced it to suspend the entire civil disobedience movement contemplated at Bardoli and elsewhere. Also, any activities specially designed to court arrests and imprisonment and all volunteer processions, public meetings for defiance of laws, etc., were to be forthwith stopped. Non-co-operators were urged to limit themselves to strictly constructive activities like spinning, weaving, Khadi-selling, propagation, etc.

More than the Chari Chaura outbreak, this decision of the Mahatma to suspend a nationwide movement which, in effect, meant complete withdrawal of the movement, shocked the people all over the country To the thousands of activists and leaders who were in jail it came as a bolt from the blue. Eminent leaders like C R Das and Motilal Nehru wrote angry letters to the Mahatma and openly aired their discontent. The Mahatma's action had farreaching import and consequences. Firstly, it meant that the Mahatma could not be relied upon to consistently carry out any non-violent agitation since his placing the impossible demand before the public that it should be absolutely (not even generally) non-violent, was asking for the moon. To put it in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru:

> The *SUDDEN SUSPENSION* of our movement after the Chauri Chaura incident was resented, I think, by almost all the prominent Congress leaders — other than Gandhiji, of course. My father (who was in jail at the time) was much upset by it. The younger people were naturally even more agitated. Our mounting hopes tumbled to the ground, and this mental reaction was to be expected What troubled us even more were the reasons given for this suspension and the consequences that seemed to flow from them. Chauri Chaura may have been and was a deplorable occurrence and wholly opposed to the spirit of the non-violent movement; but were a remote village

> and a mob of excited peasants in an out-of-the-way place going to put an end, for some time at least, to our nat onal struggle for freedom? If this was the inevitable consequence of a sporadic act of violence, then surely there was something lacking in the philosophy and technique of a non-violent struggle. For it seemed to us to be impossible to guarantee against the occurrence of some such untoward incident. Must we train the three hundred and odd millions of India in the theory and practice of non-violent action before we could go forward? And, even so, how many of us could say that under extreme provocation from the police we would be able to remain perfectly peaceful? But even if we succeeded, what of the numerous agents provocateurs, stool pigeons, and the like who crept into our movement and indulged in violence themselves or induced others to do so? If this was the sole condition of its function, then the non-violent method of resistance would always fail.[33]

Jawharlal Nehru also raises another interesting point. He says that the communal riots of 1923–24 all over the country with the attendant horrors and cruelties could, perhaps, have been averted if the 'pent up violence' of the masses was allowed to burst forth in the civil resistance movement only, even if it ensued in a bloody suppression of the same by the Government. The national cause would have become strengthened even after the suppression, and the cleavage between Hindus and Muslims would not have occurred. Though this line of thinking seems to be too imaginary and hypothetical, one cannot altogether brush aside the possibilities raised and mentioned by it.

Subhas Bose was more emphatic in condemning the Mahatma's hasty retreat. He remarked that it was nothing short of a national calamity to sound the order of retreat just when public enthusiasm was reaching the boiling point. He also says that at that time popular resentment of the Mahatma's action was very great and though the 'Dictator's decree was

obeyed at the time, ... there was a regular revolt in the Congress camp.' He further informs us that Deshabandu Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Lala Lajpat Rai and many other prominent leaders, shared in the popular resentment and especially C. R. Das was beside himself with anger and sorrow at the way Mahatma Gandhi was repeatedly bungling.[34]

It is not at all clear why Mahatma Gandhi chose a relatively small outbreak in a small village in a remote part of the country as a red signal for his retreat. Rushbrook Williams opines that,

> ' Whether ... he made Chauri Chaura the excuse for suspending a movement which he had always regarded as dangerous and now knew to be, at least for the present, hopeless, or whether this outbreak convinced him of the impossibility of carrying civil disobedience to a successful conclusion by non-violent methods, may be open to question.[35]

The Mahatma himself volunteered to offer an explanation in his paper 'Young India' He said that when violence and atrocities occurred at Amritsar, Viramgam, Kheda, Ahmedabad and Kasur, he heeded God's warning and *suspended* the anti-Rowlatt Act agitation. The next time it was through the deeds of the Bombay mob on 17 November, 1921, that God had given him a warning which he heeded not. Prior to that, Madras [obviously referring to the Moplah rebellion] also gave the warning but he heeded not. Now the brutal murders at Chauri Chaura were too much for him to ignore. He was of firm opinion that Bardoli's disobedience would be civil only if other parts of India remained non-violent. He said that Chauri Chaura was after all an aggravated symptom. Gandhiji's own explanation seems to substantiate the second surmise of Rushbrook Williams.

But it is still open to question why Gandhi did not heed the warning given by Malabar. The details of the Malabar rebellion which came to an end by January, 1922, should have been sufficiently widely known to the Mahatma

before he embarked on the proposal for civil disobedience at Bardoli from March, 1922. Gandhi was a very shrewd and alert political leader and he always kept himself informed about the latest developments, at least on the Indian political scene. Hence we cannot attribute ignorance or inadequate knowledge of things to the Mahatma So, we have to look for other kinds of explanations. Perhaps Mahatma knew that Muslims never believed in non-violence and it was futile to expect it from them. So it would be really a gratification if they refrained from widespread violence or any violence for the time-being. It was the Hindus and other non-Muslim masses which were expected to strictly follow the Gandhian policy of non-violence and when breaches were made even from their side, the Mahatma could not tolerate. Anyway, we can not definitely say any thing over this matter.

But it will suffice to further mention here that the revolutionaries of various groups who decided to give Mahatma Gandhi and his non-violent movement a chance, were very much chagrined at this deplorable turn of events and the sudden back-tracking by the Mahatma. They felt themselves no longer bound by their word not to commit any acts of violence since the context in which their word was given had itself disappeared. Within a month after the Bardoli retreat, Gandhi himself was arrested, tried for sedition and convicted to six years imprisonment. There upon the revolutionaries, "Being satisfied. . that his (Gandhi's) programme had definitely failed, ... decided ... to resume their compaign of violence "[36]

Finally, a word should also be said about the fate of the Chauri Chaura rioters. The British rulers wreaked judicial vengeance on these villagers when M. E Holme, the then Sessions Judge sentenced 172 peasants to death on the charges of rioting resulting in murder. *The Congress* remarked that there was least delicacy shown about this and even in cases conducted during the regime of the Martial law in the Punjab, such severe punishments were never imposed.[37] A 'Manifesto of the Communist International on the Chauri Chaura sentence', strongly denounced this

sentence and remarked that the atrocity of this legal murder was unparallelled, even in the bloody history of the British rule in India.[38] However due to the agitations and legal battles waged by Madan Mohan Malviya, only 20 people were sent to the gallows.[39]

RAMPA FITURI

About one and half years after the suppression of the notorious Moplah Rebellion, there occurred in the South another armed rebellion in the Agency tracts of the Circar districts of the then United Madras Province This was quite unlike its predecessor in Malabar in almost all aspects except that of being extremely anti-British Firstly, it was caused primarily due to the extreme economic exploitation of the 'Konda Doras' (Koyas) of the region by the arbitrary policies of the government coupled with the cruel oppression of those innocent and ignorant Girijans by the bureaucratic officials of the region. Secondly, it was completely non-communal and was at least in the initial stages solely directed against the government, that too on the British officers and the armed police. Even in the last lap of the rebellion, we find very few depredations or atrocities by the rebels on the people at large. Thirdly, the happening of the outbreak at that specific period and its sustained continuance for about two years in the form of a chivalrous guerilla warfare was due almost to the colourful leadership of a single person, Sri Alluri Srirama Raju (@ Sitaramaraju), a *Kshatriya Bramachari* and an ascetic by profession and practice. Finally, though the rebellion when alive did not have any significant impact on the national movement, after its suppression and the glorious martyrdom of its leaders, it became a great source of inspiration for the nationalist movement in Andhra in the later years. The examples set by this heroic rebellion greatly enthused and motivated the youth of Andhra towards selfless service and undaunted struggles for the sake of Independence. We have already seen that the consequences of the Moplah rebellion were quite contrary to this.

The sequence of the actual events in the rebellion as well as the economic and political history behind it have been extensively dealt with by many authors in Andhra, especially Dr. J. Mangamma, Dantuluri Venkatarama Raju, Kodali Lakshminarayana and Ponnaluri Radhakrishna Murthy. Hence, we will limit ourselves here to a brief sketch of the rebellion and some comments on its salient points. Alluri Srirama Raju, was born on 4 July, 1897, to Sri Venkata Rama Raju, a roving photographer settled in Rajamundry, and Suryanarayanamma at Pandrangi, Visakhapatnam division, at his maternal grandfather's home. He was unfortunate to lose his father in childhood and had to move along with his family of a mother, a sister and a younger brother, frequently, here and there, to make a living with the help of their near relatives. He could only study up to Form V changing various High Schools, the final one being the High School at Tuni. He was, obviously, not a brilliant student and seems to have been subject to (the generally normal) adolescent inconsistencies. He also seems to have been fired by a zeal of patriotism early in his childhood; at any rate, he was definitely inspired by the chivalrous traditions of Khshatriyas and wanted to emulate the heroic deeds of the various kshatriy a heroes of the epics and of later day history. There seems to be no valid evidence for connecting his adolescence with any (miscarried) love affair, though such a possibility cannot be altogether brushed aside. There are conflicting views expressed by various authors regarding this aspect and it is really an enigma to this day why he became famous by the name Sitarama Raju – was it because of his intense love towards some girl named Sita whom he could not marry, or was it due to his unbounded affection towards his own sister Sita, or was it for any other entirely different reason?

What is certain is that he took to the life of an extremely religious and ascetic *brahmachari* from the time his family shifted to Tuni. This was around 1918 it seems. It is not clear what exactly he and his family did and where they resided during the First World War. From Tuni, Srirama Raju went on pilgrimages to the Himalayas once and then to Nasik a second

time. Both times he is said to have had travelled hundreds of miles through dense jungles on foot only. This reveals his extreme religiosity as well as his iron grit and ability to withstand extreme hardships. Ponnaluri Radhakrishna Murthy stated in his book that during his first pilgrimage, Srirama Raju chanced to meet a revolutionry leader, Prithvi Singh, who introduced him to a secret society at Chittagong and enthused him in revolutionary activities.[40] A secret report by C. N. Sweney in February, 1924, also mentioned that:

> ... the latest information (quite uncorroborated) about the Raju is that he is a member of some Calcutta secret society which is engaged in the manufacture of bombs, etc., and that having come under the notice of the police, he returned to his native haunts.[41]

Obviously, there is much obscurity regarding this point. But if we remember that his pilgrimages took place in 1919–20, and also that at that time a lot of revolutionaries and political activists were touring extensively in the country in the garb of Sadhus and Faqirs preaching nationalism and inculcating a spirit of struggle and sacrifice among the people, this seems not to be altogether impossible. But what is beyond doubt is that he made two trips on foot to North India and during at least one of the trips he travelled extensively over North India visiting Bombay, Baroda, Benares, Rishikesh, Badrinath, Assam, Bengal and perhaps even Nepal.[42] He gained great worldly wisdom and also expertise in horse-riding, shooting, archery etc., as a result of these trips. He was also said to have acquired talents in yoga, astrology, architecture and other ancient shastras acoording to the Hindu tradition. He was said to have become a worshipper of *Kali* (mother-goddess in her ferocious form) and also tamed many a wild animal.

After returning from these pilgrimages, Srirama Raju seems to have determined to lead the life of an ascetic and do meditation (*Tapas*) in the calm and serene atmosphere of the Godavari Agency forests. He settled down at Krishnadevipeta for this purpose and soon earned great popularity in and around that area as a holy and saintly person. The innocent

and poverty-stricken Girijans (Hill-people) used to greatly revere him and take his advice regarding all domestic and worldly affairs. At that time the Non-cooperation movement was at its height all over India and also in the Andhra districts. Srirama Raju seems to have not been influenced much by the Non-co-operation movement and he definitely did not participate in it. But the great impact of the movement could not have failed to strike a chord in his heart too. Also the severe economic exploitation to which the hill-people were subjected and the atrocities perpetrated by the Depty. Tahsildar, Mr. Bastien, the uncrowned tyrant of the area, prodded him to do some thing to protect and fight for the Girijans. By his own account he is said to have started a temperance movement and assiduously propagated among the hill-people about its necessity. He also had started several *Panchayat* courts and settled the local disputes. He might have also advocated disobedience of uncivil laws and resistance to bureaucratic atrocities. In no time he gained great popularity among the people and instilled great fear in the hearts of the exploiters and local bureaucrats. As a result, the Agency administration apprehending some sort of *fituri* in case he was allowed to continue his residence at Krishnadevipet, decided to send him to the Addatigala area and provided him with 50 acres of land at a village, Paidiputta, four miles from Addatigala. The Dutcherthi muttadar was instructed to build cottages for Sriramaraju and his family and also to undertake the cultivation of the land gifted. The Tahsildar of Addatigala supplied the family of Raju food and provision too, free of cost.

Here we should make a digression and deal with another person who was equally responsible for the outbreak but from a different side. He was Mr. Bastien, the Depty. Tahsildar of the Gudem area. If any one oppressor can be said to have caused great discontent and hatred in the minds of the Girijans and turned them to open rebellion, it was he. He, along with his equally notorious overseer, Santhanam Pillai, virtually bled the hill-people white. Even Happel was compelled to acknowledge this and report :

> Almost all villagers under Deputy Tahsildar Bastien, were loud in their complaint against his misdeeds, They said that major portion of the grants sanctioned for constructing roads found its way into his pockets, all labour was forced and coolies were not paid properly If complaints were made, the complainants were beaten and ill treated, and prevented from approaching the higher authorities and obtaining redressal. There was a great deal of truth in these complaints and it was also a fact that Bastien and his overseer were hated by every body.[43]

It was Bastien who had alienated and angered the Gamu brothers and Yendu Padal, who later played a very important part in the rebellion. After the suppression of the rebellion, the British government also took this Depty Tahsildar and his overseer to task. The former's properties were confiscated and the latter was summarily dismissed.

Now to come to the main story again, Alluri Srirama Raju did not at all like his forced stay at Paidiputta under police surveillance. After a few months he appealed to the old and ailing Fazlullah Khan, the Depty. Collector, Polavaram, a friend of Raju's uncle and a very pious man, to allow him to proceed to Nepal on pilgrimage Fazl-ul-lah having sanctioned this (just one day before his death), the police surveillance was lifted and Raju sent away his mother and brother to Narasapuram and himself proceeded again to Peddavalasa in the Gudem mutta, instead of going to Nepal. He stayed in the Gudem mutta in utmost secrecy, making feverish preparations for his *fituri* with the active support of the Gamu brothers.

On August 22, 1922, the *fituri* started with an attack on the Chintapalli police station Thereafter, the rebels swiftly proceeded to Krishnadevipet police station which they looted on the 23rd and thence to Rajavommangi P.S. which they looted on the 24th. At Rajavommangi they released Mottadam Virayya Dora, ex-muttadar of Gudem, who was in custody undergoing prosecution for his flouting the deportation orders served on him Srirama Raju was said to have given the

slogans 'Gandhi Ki Jai' after looting the Chintapalli P. S., and was said to have been fired by the belief that he was intended by providence to be a ruler on earth.[44] About 300 persons were said to have participated in the raids and in all, the squad secured 26 muskets and about 2500 rounds of ammunition. At first, the *fituri* was thought to have been aimed at the release of Mottadam Virayya Dora (who was concerned in the Lagarai rising in 1916), but soon the government sources had to acknowledge that their surmise was wrong. It appears that Virayya Dora was not at all willing to go with the gang. He soon seperated from it and had been captured (before 16th September, 1922). The ranks of the rebels had also become depleted and there were only about 80 hardcore adherents to the cause of Srirama Raju who was said to aspire to the rulership of the Golugonda agency.[45] Srirama Raju and his eighty followers in a series of swift actions, first attacked a police party near *Onjeri* village on 3 September in which a police constable was killed, and on 24 September ambushed a police party in Damanapalli Ghats killing two renowned British officers, Scott Coward and Hayter, on the spot. One constable of the rescue party under Mr. Armitage was also killed by the rebels who were lying in wait. One head constable (Mohammed Yakub) was wounded, one constable (of Bellary police) missing, and another constable wounded. The wounded and the bodies of those killed could only be brought in by the villagers.[46] Six .303 rifles and about 300 rounds of ammunition, one German Service pistol with 16 rounds, property of Scott Coward, and one British service pistol of Hayter with presumably some rounds, were captured by the rebels[47] There are conflicting reports as to whether Srirama Raju was in the ambushing party that day but the account of P. Radhakrishna Murthy that Raju was unaware of it and when informed by his followers about it he was quite enranged and reprimanded Gantam Dora as to why he killed people,[48] does not seem to be credible. The later raids in which Srirama Raju himself participated are themselves a strong refutation of this account. The hero of the battle of the day seems to be one Gokiri Yerresu whose marksmanship claimed the lives of the two English officers (and not Yendu Padal as some other

accounts put it).[49] On 19 October, Chodawaram was attacked without any loss of lives and without any tangible results for Raju's party. Raju was said to have talked to the Tahsildar who prostrated before him (Raju) and offered plantains. Raju talked with him a long time about the political developments. Raju was reported to have said that the Fituri would continue for two years more and there would be bloodshed. He was also reported to have expressed regret and disgust that Indians were invariably present with the Europeans whenever he wanted to shoot,[50] thus making his task very difficult. On 24 October, Raju and his party laid another ambush for the police party at Ramavaram, but the police were fortunate in having been able to retreat with only one wounded and the rebels were unfortunate in losing as many as 4 lives.[51]

So, right from the beginning of the rebellion we find Raju and his party on the offensive. Their military dispositions and strike capabilities seem to have been very effective. In the words of A. J. Happell,

> It is by now quite evident that the Raju's Intelligence department is most efficient. He gets news of the movements of our force immediately they leave a place and most of the information we receive is actually sent in by him in order to mislead us; all our messages have now to be written in code or French. His military dispositions are also most effective and preclude any chance of surprise. His favourite position is just below a ghat with a strong party holding the ghat in ambush; his camps are always carefully picketted even when situated in the most inaccessible places and all his positions are carefully chosen with an eye to an easy means of retreat if he is attacked. It is therefore obvious that it would be a folly to attack him with only one striking force. Valuable lives would be lost and the rebels would certainly get away with another alleged victory over the police. Our only chance of success is to operate with at least two forces, preferably three, and first cut off the rebels' line of retreat before attacking them. ... All this com-

> bined with the unexpectedly extended range of rebels' operations make it quite clear that the campaign is going to be much more difficult than I anticipated and I have come to the conclusion that my present striking forces (the Malabaris) are inadequate.[52]

Accordingly, fresh reinforcements were awaited by the British officers. Though Martial Law or a form of it was not declared in the area, the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command, was actively involved in the deliberations to curb the *Fituri* as also was the General Officer Commanding, Madras district. By the end of November 1922, 447 men belonging to Malabar special force, 1000 (thousand) reserve and other police and about 100 Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, etc., were rushed into the Agency area Concerted efforts were made to round up the rebel party and this resulted in two important encounters with the rebels at Pedagaddapalem on 6 December, 1922, and at Lingapuram on 7 December, 1922, with heavy casualties and losses on the side of the rebels. In the former encounter, 2 muskets, 1 revolver, 230 cartridges, 32 winchester cartridges, some bayonets and swords, etc were recovered, one rebel was killed and another wounded. The rebels suffered heavier losses in the Lingapuram encounter. Eight rebels were killed, several wounded and four were captured. Nine muskets, 2 Lee Enfield .303 rifles, 1 automatic pistol, 745 police carbine cartridges and 162 rounds of .303 rifle, many bayonets, swords etc., were recovered[53] These two encounters could be said to have shattered the morale of the rebels to a considerable extent and after these encounters even a petty squabble was said to have taken place between some squad members and the leader.

From then onwards the rebels under Raju were put on the defensive and suffered great hardships. While the police received more reinforcements as and when they required, the rebels' ranks were slowly dwindling. It was almost impossible for them to find new recruits. The early attempts of Srirama Raju to enlist the support and active participation of some of his friends in Tuni and other places in the plains, were largely

futile. His letter to M. R. Ry. Pericherla Suryanarayana Raju of Tuni, dated the 16 September, which fell into the hands of the police (but not before it was read and returned by the said Raju), shows as to how desperately he must have felt the need for some some trusted and devoted followers from the plains to strengthen his hands. It is also a testimony to his firm resolve to continue the 'War' against the British come what may, though it also consisted of some boasting about his 'victories'. Happel comments on this letter: "... it was felt that no sane man could have written such a letter and it indicated unbalanced mind bordering on insanity." [54] We need not agree with Happell's harsh comments, but have to agree that Srirama Raju wrote the letter in quite an agitated condition inspite of his victories and that he did not realistically assess the actual position of forces on either side and hoped for the hopeless.

Happell had summed up the details of the rebellion till the end of 1922, thus: 1. Rebels attacked 5 police stations; 2. Six 303 rifles, 27 muskets, 10 swords, 38 bayonets, 2495 carbine cartridges, 300 rifle rounds, 2 Automatic pistols and some police uniforms captured by the rebels; 3. On the Government side 7 including two British officers killed and 4 wounded; 4. 35 police officers arrested by the rebels and released after short detention; 5. Telegraph lines cut at several places and police tappal interecepted; 6. Supplies on compulsion at times but voluntarily in general, rendered by the villagers to the rebels; 7. Five encounters with the rebels occurred in which 12 rebels were killed, several wounded and 5 captured; and 8. At various other places and occassions, in all 27 rebels captured. [55] Happell was also emphatic in his later report that police intelligence officers captured by Srirama Raju and his followers were never ill-treated. [56]

The most spectacular and sensational event in 1923 was the appearance of Srirama Raju with a small band of four rebels at Annavaram in the early morning of April 17, 1923. The policemen in the local police station were in sound sleep when they were abruptly woken up by Gamu Mallu Dora's kicks and one of them was commanded to fetch the

Sub-Inspector. The shivering S. I. prostrated himself before the Raju and informed that all the guns and ammunition were taken away by the higher authorities. The Raju then proceeded to the temple on the hill. Meanwhile, hundreds of people, men, women and children, gathered to take a *darsan* of this 'Maha Purusha' (Great Man). Many washed his feet, burnt incense and offered fruits, milk, etc. One Cherukuri Narsimha Murty talked at length with Srirama Raju who said that Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence alone could not deliver any goods and if his (Raju's) theory and methods were followed, they could achieve freedom within two years. [57]

On May 31, 1923, a squad led by Gamu Gantam Dora arrested an Intelligence S.I. and a Deputy Tahsildar at Koyyuru. Gantam Dora showed great respect towards the Brahmin Deputy Tahsidar, prostrated himself at his feet, and appreciated the Depty. Tahsildar's gentle conduct towards the people. He was highly critical of the former Depty. Tahsildar Bastien, whom he said he shot at in the encounter at Onjeri but missed the aim. He vowed that he would anyhow kill Bastien one day and after sometime released the two captives and went away with his squad. On 10 June, 1923, Srirama Raju along with his followers entered the village Malkangiri, stormed into the police station, detained the S I. and also arrested the Depty. Tahsildar who was in the village and talked political matters over with the Depty Tahsildar. In those talks he was said to have very respectfully referred to Mahatma Gandhi but differed with his policies. He was said to have boasted about his own powers and declared that police bullets could do no harm to him. He was also reported to have said that he was sure to get help from Punjab for his struggle. The rebels did not indulge in any violence, but requisitioned the necessary provisions from the villagers and went away peacefully after some time. [58]

Srirama Raju gained an able lieutenant in one Vegiraju Satyanarayna Raju (called 'Aggi Raju' in view of his firebrand character) shortly after his Annavaram visit. But from this time, the generally pacific policy of the rebels towards the

villagers which was hitherto adopted seems to have undergone a change, at least when Aggi Raju and Yerdu Padal happened to be in command Aggi Raju was of the firm opinion that it was due to the support of the traitrous Indians that the British managed to run the show and, hence, was quite ruthless towards informers and Indian officers and men. This over a period of time created much hostility among the people whose interests were rightly or wrongly injured by the rebels, and the solid support which Srirama Raju was till then getting from the people began to slowly erode.

After their surprise visits to Annavaram and adjoining areas, Srirama Raju, Gantam Dora and others returned to the Gudem Agency area. Meanwhile, the Government imposed a punitive tax on several villages for having supported the rebels or failed to inform the police about their whereabouts. They also warned the *muttadars* of serious consequences if information was withheld and introduced a system of night watchmen in the villages. Rebels also raided several villages and commandeered provisions. Their efforts to secure arms through raids on police stations at Annavaram and Malkangiri were futile since arms in all the police stations neighbouring the Agency Area were withdrawn by the higher authorities. On 6 August, 1923, there was an exchange of fire between the police and Srirama Raju's party near Anthada with no losses to either party. On 10 September 1923, Gamu Mallu Dora, a very important rebel leader was captured at his concubine's house in a village called Nadimpalem. It is averred that Sri Rama Raju was quite angry with Gamu Mallu Dora for his alchoholic addiction and expelled him from the squad, taking away the rifle in his possession and only after this incident Mallu Dora was caught by the police and hence his arrest could not be deemed a set-back to the rebels. Anyhow, it should be conceded that it was a big moral victory for the police since all people of the Agency could not be expected to know the inner feuds of the rebels and to their eyes Mallu Dora was still an important leader.

On 22 September, 1923, Raju and his party raided the Paderu police station injuring one S. I. and a constable. The

rebels were on a constant move and on 25 October, they attacked the Gudem police camp killing a lance-naik and losing one among them dead. They did not use any rifle but only police carbines in this attack. The most important development with regard to this raid was that the whole of the Gudem village rallied to the side of the rebels and attacked the police with bows and arrows. The rebels were not successful in their aim here also. On 29 October, there occurred an encounter between the rebels and the police at Gajupakala in which a rebel was killed, and the .303 rifle without bolt picked up by the rebels at Gudem, 21 rounds of ammunition, some country-made guns as well as some books of Raju, were recovered by the police After the Gudem attack, police patrolling was intensified and some small skirmishes took place before the advent of 1924 in which 3 rebels were killed [59]

The year 1924 commenced with the decision of the government to bring in the Assam Rifles who had dealt with the *Kuki rebellion* in a similar hill area of Assam in 1918–19, and were under experienced military men like Major Goodall. Major Goodall with his Assam Rifles arrived in the Agency area on the 27 January, 1924, and the strategy to deal with the rebels was left to him. He was given the over-all command of 695 special plus 430 Assam Rifles, and they had to deal with only about 100 or so rebels poorly equipped and trained. In April, 1924, Major Goodall worked out the final strategy. Three posts above the ghats with eight sub-areas and three more posts below the ghats with nine sub-areas were organized. Each sub-area was put under an intelligence officer. Patrol after patrol and the intelligence Staff went in search of rebels in the hills, valleys, ghats and forests. This tireless search slowly began to yield fruit and on May 6, 1924, a decisive encounter took place at Kirrabu between the rebels and the Malabar special police under the Intelligence Inspector Upendra Patnaik. [60] The rebels, immediately as they saw the police party, opened fire and wounded one Malabar spl. p.c. No. 1760, Narayan Nair. The police party also opened fire and the Intelligence Inspector, Upendra Patnaik rushed

forward, rather recklessly, and managed to catch hold of Aggi Raju. The capture of the flamboyant Aggi Raju was a big blow to the rebels.[61]

But on the next day another most unfortunate event occurred. According to police reports, Srirama Raju was captured and shot dead while trying to escape. One Jamadar K T. Kunchu Menon was said to have effected the arrest and he had also claimed to have shot Srirama Raju dead [62] With the arrest of Aggi Raju and the (alleged) capture and death of Srirama Raju, the back of the rebellion was broken, but still important rebel leaders like Gantam Dora and Yendu Padal were at large. On 26 May, Yendu Padal was killed by the irate villagers of Peda Jeruvu near Pedda Valasa at the instigation of their village munsiff at whom Padal shot twice but missed. On the 7 June, 1924, Gantam Dora and another rebel were killed in an encounter with the police near Yendu Mamidi village.

> According to the Jamadar's account Gantam Dora was cornered between three portions of his party and put up a stout fight running from cover to cover and firing at the police at the same time endeavouring to escape.[63]

With the deathof Gantam Dora, the last important rebel leader surviving and the capture in quick succession of stalwart fighters like Gokire Yerresu and Bonkula Modigadu in the month of June, 1924, the rebellion might be said to have finally met its doom.

Thus ended the illustrious armed rebellion of Andhradesa in a practical failure but its 'spiritual' successes did not take long to make themselves felt. Within 3 years after the death of (or alleged death of) Srirama Raju, Madduri Annapurnaiah and other Youth leaders of the Congress started regular annual birth-day celebrations of Srirama Raju and carried his message of devoted, undaunted and selfless struggle for freedom (by all possible means) far and wide into the hearts of the people of Andhra. The Civil Disobedience movement which burst forth in all its vigour in 1930 brought the image of Alluri Srirama

Raju also into the limelight and the impact of Srirama Raju's rebellion on the Andhra youth was clearly perceived since during that movement only. As we have already remarked, this contrasts guite differently with the Moplah rebellion which was but a drag on the people who desired to participate in the national struggle.

There is a great controversy as to whether it was Srirama Raju only who was captured and killed on that fateful day of May 7, 1924. The Government itself was not sufficiently convinced in its initial despatches, which only referred to the fact that a man who stated that he was the leader Raju, was captured and shot dead [64] The body was also photographed before the final rites. So it is quite clear that the body was not given to, or even shown to, his mother or near relatives (or even to his uncle Ramakrishna Raju who, after all, was a loyal government servant). The police were in a hurry to cremate the body and an inquest report said to have been prepared before its cremation had never been revealed (not even to this day). What might be the cause for this undue haste ? If it was Srirama Raju that was really killed, the police and the government only had every thing to gain by the display of the body to a larger number of people and getting the fact of his death confirmed by his mother and near relatives.

Of course, there is a very convincing reason to account for this haste. Nobody believes in the cock and bull story of the police that Srirama Raju was shot dead while trying to escape. That is a routine justification hurled at the face of the public by a trigger-happy police. It is established by now from various accounts that the man who said he was Srirama Raju was taken to Major Goodall who questioned him angrily as to why he (Raju) killed the white Officers at Damanapalli Ghats. Raju was said to have replied that the ambush occurred in his absence and asked Goodall to take him to court. Goodall refused, asked Raju to say his final prayers and shot him dead at point blank range. Hence the hurry in cremating the body as well as the real secret in suppressing the inquest report.

But if we may be completely satisfied with this reasoning, another great hurdle lies in accepting the version of the manner in which he was arrested. In so far as his arrest is concerned, there is no doubt that he was arrested alone, whether it might be due to the chance find of Jamadar Kunchu Menon's constables or due to his voluntary surrender as alleged by authors like Kodali Lakshminarayana, D. V. Ramaraju and Dr. J. Mangamma and umpteen others. This is somewhat puzzling since by Happell's account which we quoted earlier, Srirama Raju took great precautions and even when stationed at an inaccessible place always posted adequate number of pickets and there were always some personal bodyguards protecting him. And then, there seems to be no valid reason for his decision to surrender. Even if he wanted to surrender, was it a place or an occassion to surrender. Should we think that he was so stupid as to surrender in such a dangerous place, occassion and manner. Again, would he have left his colleagues like Gantam Dora to their own fate and singly surrendered?

A contemporary of Srirama Raju and a well-known socialist leader and writer, late Sri Krovvidi Linga Raju, took great pains to drive his point of view to my heart that it was not Alluri Srirama Raju who was captured and killed but a dummy in his place It was said that in the encounter in which Aggi Raju was caught Srirama Raju was not present and only late in the night could he meet his squad and a conference was held All people present took oaths to fight till the bitter end and lay down their lives in battle. But all of them (except of course, Srirama Raju) were insistent that Srirama Raju should under no circumstance be allowed to die or be captured, and he should vanish from the province altogether To facilitate his escape, a dummy was to die in his place One Karanam Rama Swamy, who bore much resemblance to Srirama Raju, volunteered to die and the next morning he was escorted by two guards to a place near the Malabar special police camp. The two guards witnessed his arrest and finally returned to their squad without firing a single shot at the police. The presence of two more rebels near the site of

arrest of the person calling himself Srirama Raju was even admitted by Jamadar Kunchu Menon who said he ordered to fire at those rebels but they disappeared fast into the dense jungles. Almost all the people of Gudem Agency and the muttadars knew about this supreme self-sacrifice of Karanam Rama Swami and it was that which moved them to tears. The identification by many was deliberate to guard this secret, whereas officers like the Depty. Tahsildar, etc., might have been really mistaken as to the real identity. Srirama Raju went to Burma via Bengal and engaged himself there in secret activities to overthrow the British rule He probably died in Burma itself in 1930 or so.

Late Sri Krovvidi Lingaraju further told me that the photograph of the dead body taken by the police and a childhood photograph of Srirama Raju were sent to London and secretly got tallied there in the famous Scotland Yard's forensic laboratories, by some influential friends of his (K. Linga Raju's) but they did not tally So, there was every reason to suppose that it was not Srirama Raju who was captured and shot dead.[65]

The *Congress* edited by Late Sri Madduri Annapurnaiah and also at times by Sri K. Lingaraju, also publicly expressed its doubts about the death of Srirama Raju as far back as in 1925 itself The Godavari district congress committee refrained from passing condolences to Srirama Raju only in view of the then current rumours that Srirama Raju was not dead. That is why Sri Annapurnaiah took the initiative and pains to organize the celebrations of the birth anniversary (*Jayanti*) of this hero and not the death anniversary (*Vardhanti*). Moreover to the first such meeting organized in Rajamundry in 1927, under the presidentship of Sri Vemavarapu Ramadas Panthulu, more number of police than the number of audience were present. Even as late as 1930–31, the police used to arrest many bearded Sadhus on the suspicion of their resembling Srirama Raju and only after due verification release them.[66]

Of course, it is not easy for a rational mind to unquestioningly accept this version either. But then the firm convic-

tions of eminent freedom fighters and learned contemporaries of Srirama Raju cannot also be roughly brushed aside. It is high time that the Government of Andhra Pradesh should wake up to the enormous importance and enigma of this problem and institute a Commission of Enquiry with comprehensive terms of reference and make available to it all public and confidential (including rhe highly secret Intelligence) reports, so that some light can be thrown on this dark corner. We should not forget that the Government of India instituted two Commissions of Enquiry into the alleged death, in a plane-crash in Formoza, of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Finally, something regarding the causes of this rebellion—this was not the first time that a reballion occurred in tne Agency area. Right from 1840 there were periodical rebellions in the Godavari Agency area, among which the Rampa rebellion of 1879 led by one Dwarabandhala Chandra Reddy (or Chandraiah) was the most serious (more serious than that of Srirama Raju). The Lagarai *Fituri* of 1916–1917, was as though an immediate prelude to the rebellion we have outlined here. The causes were mainly economic – the restriction of *Podu* (shifting cultivation), the stringent restrictions on the Girijans regarding their entry into and use of reserved forests, the untrammelled powers assumed by the Government to declare any forest area as reserved, coupled with the arbitrary powers of arrest and deportation exercisable and not infrequently exercised by the Agency Commissioner, etc., are the main causes of discontent and desparate fury among the tribal people. The oppression and exploitation of the subordinate officials down from the rank of the Tahsildar to the ordinary forest chowkidar in concert with the greedy contractors and traders from the plains, had in many cases acted as the most immediate spark which ignited the powder keg. But it is also true that

> ... there has been no new reservation since 1899 and though the repression of Podu has been going on pretty steadily since 1910 and there had been some discontent about it from time to time, it required the

services of Srirama Raju to exploit the 'grievance' and magnify it into an operative cause of the Fituri.[07]

Something must also be said about the manner in which the rebellion was conducted. Srirama Raju was very particular, especially in the early stages, that his men should not drink or loot. He also did not allow the killing of any Indian policemen or officers and by all accounts asked his men to concentrate their fire-power on the British officers only. The kind manner in which he treated the captured Intelligence officers and constables to which even Mr. Happell paid his tributes, is a convincing proof of this point. The great chivalrous spirit with which he conducted the rebellion is evident at almost every step. He was highly religious and ascetic and did not tolerate any excesses on the part of his followers. Perhaps this might have resulted in disenchantment with him even among his own followers. Hence, it seems highly improbable that he planned for himself to become the king of the Golugonda Agency. What may be more reasonable to assume is that he could not drive the idea of Swaraj into the hearts of his innocent and ignorant followers except by the idiom of the kings and subjects, and it is not altogether improbable that these tribals assumed that the *fituri* was for the replacement of the British King with an Indian one and who else could they think better suited to that post than their *Devudu* (God)–Srirama Raju! That Srirama Raju was a bit boastful, self-complacent and gravely under-estimated the enemy forces, is only a reflection on his (and quite natural) immaturity and inexperience (After all he was only 25 years old when he started the rebellion !). Perhaps it was also an inheritance of a 'brave' *kshatriya* tradition. Apart from this we cannot attribute any ambitions or ill-intentions to this great patriot of Andhra Desa who endeavoured to exert all the *khatram* (fighting power and valour) at his command for the liberation of his motherland.

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CHAPTER VI

REVOLUTIONARY TERRORISM IN THE NORTH

We have seen that the sudden *volte-face* of Mahatma Gandhi consequent upon the Chauri Chaura outbreak had chagrined not only almost all the revolutionaries of the day who upto then were lying low, but also many militant non-co-operators. We have also seen that even during the non-co-operation movement there were sporadic, some of them quite serious, violent outbreaks. But the official suspension of the movement gave a free hand to all revolutionaries who were till then bound by their word of honour to give a chance to Gandhiji's non-violent movement. So in the year 1922, and in the succeeding four or five years, we witness a revival of revolutionary organizations all over Northern India and sporadic outbursts of terroristic activities too. In Punjab there was the Babbar Akali movement during 1922–25, a violent off-shoot of the generally peaceful and non-violent Akali movement. In the United Provinces we find the formation and rapid spread of the Hindustan Republican Association, wedded to the use of violent means for the overthrow of the British government. In Bengal, there was a recrudescence of terrorist activities by the 'New Violence' party – comprising of impatient revolutionaries from both the Anushilan and Juganthar groups. During this period (1922–27), we also find M. N. Roy and his comrades abroad working feverishly to build up a communist movement in India and succeeding in a small way. In this chapter we will discuss the first three main developments and deal with the story of the early communist activities in a separate chapter.

THE BABBAR AKALIS

The Baabar Akalis were a very daring terrorist group who indulged in many violent attacks upon Government offici-

als, Police, and the local exploiters in collusion with the government. Their activities were limited to the *Do-aba* region of the province of Punjab. They had connections with, or some of them had been the members of, the Ghadar party; whereas, their movement seems to be a violent off-shoot of the generally peaceful Akali movement.

Akal means God, the deathless, and the Akali movement was an intensely religious one of a reforming wing of Sikhs who wanted to have democratic control and management of all their Gurudwaras. The origins of this movement go back to 1919 when a Sikh League was inaugurated with the avowed object of demanding full rights for the Sikh nation (*Qaum*), and of reviving in the Sikh public interest in politics. As a result of their endeavours, the Sikhs secured full control over the Golden Temple and the Khalsa college at Amritsar. Encouraged by this initial success and also motivated by the spirit of the non-co-operation movement then raging all over the country, the 'new' Sikhs established a committee called the 'Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak' in November 1920, with a view to undertake the management of all Sikh Gurudwaras and other religious institutions, and to launch a peaceful agitation to achieve the said purpose.

> The new 'reforming' party had been for sometime dissatisfied with the management of the Gurudwaras, or shrines, which for, long years, under arrangements sanctioned by the 'old' conservative party, had been controlled by resident abbots. Many of these *Mahants*, although enjoying wide discretion in the management of considerable revenues, were less Sikhs than Hindus fact not unconnected with an inextricable admixture, in the endowment of many of the shrines, of Hindu and Sikh beneficence. The 'new' Sikhs alleged malversation and abuses of every kind the 'old' Sikhs regarded the malcotents [new Sikhs] as inspired only by a desire for plunder. Into this quarrel, primarily domestic to the Sikh community, the emissaries of non-co-operation now penetrated, with

> rhe result that the 'new Sikhs', and particularly the Akali jathas – bands of volunteers forming the most zealous section of the reformers – became strongly anti-government and even revolutionary in their outlook. Refusing to be appeased by the efforts of govermment to enquire into, and remedy, cases of alleged mismanagement, the Akalis began to 'occupy' shrines, and eject lawful incumbents. Taking their cue from the non-co-operation movement, they eschewed the ordinary processes of law, while professing to act in a 'non-violent' manner – so long as they were not resisted. Somewhat naturally, these tactics were combated by the other party. Bloody quarrels such as will necessarily occur between opposing factions of simple-minded and walike people, shortly broke out. In February India shuddered to hear of a terrible massacre, by the Hindu abbot of Nankana Sahib, of the band of 'new Sikhs' designing to eject him from his great and wealty shrine.[1]

So summarizes Rushbrook Williams, the essential points of the Akali movement till February, 1921. Of course, he only reflects the British view-point and we have to add that the British government 'naturally' supported the 'conservative' wing whenever possible and let loose great repression on the Akali movement. The Mahant Narain Das of the Nankana Sahib who employed about 500 hooligans and Pathans to cold-bloodedly massacre about 150 pious and peaceful Sikhs inside the Gurudwara, had the dead bodies dragged to the north side of the Gurudwara and cut to pieces before being burnt in a most fiendish manner, was later hanged along with seven other accomplices after a protracted trial. The Sikhs all along were absolutely peaceful and allowed themselves to be butchered effortlessly, otherwise there would have been many casualties on the side of Mahant's party also. Towards the end of 1922, the famous Guru-ka-Bagh satyagraha by Akali Jathas took place near Amrisar where also the Akalis were absolutely non-violent and bore the most cruel lathi-charges of the police with great equanimity. On the third anniversary of the Naan-

kana massacre, another massacre of peaceful Akalis took place when the British police fired indiscriminately at a 'shahidi' Jatha and the crowd accompanying it when it was on its way to the *Jaiton* Gurudwara in the princely state of Nabha. Here also the absolutely non-violent nature of the Jatha and the absence of retaliatory violence even after the indiscriminate firing was testified to even by Mr. Zimand, the American Press correspondent, who was an eye-witness to the tragedy.[2] Finally the British Government came down and passed the Sikh Gurudwaras and Shrines Act, 1925, accepting the control of the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee over Sikh religious centres.

Now the origins of the Babbar Akalis must be sought in the injured feelings of the militant sections of Akalis after the Nankana Sahib tragedy. According to the opinion of the first assessor, Rai Sahib Lala Bhagat Ram (who returned a verdict of 'guilty' in the famous Babbar Akali conspiracy case of Lahore)–

> ... it was proved that a conspiracy was entered into between Kishen Singh and several other accused towards the end of 1921 or the commencement of 1922 at various places in the eastern parts of Jullundur district. These men went about making seditious speeches, warning the public not to help the government by giving any kind of information regarding their movements, actions or propaganda. By their speeches they tried to create disaffection against the government with the object of fomenting rebellion, turning the British out of the Punjab and *establishing a Sikh Raj in the Province and Swaraj in British India.* That was the objective which they placed before the public. In March 1922, Kishen Singh was at Anandapur and there conspired to murder 'Jholichucks' (supporters of the Government). Thus...the conspiracy to murder loyalists was formed in the beginning of 1922.[3]

The Kishen Singh referred to here is the famous Sirdar Kishen Singhji Gadgajja (Gargaj) who was said to be the main leader of the Babbar Akalis and was hanged with five others on

27 February, 1926. Sirdar Bhagat Singh wrote that this Kishen Singhji also participated in the famous Guru-ka-Bagh agitation and when a warrant was issued, went underground. One Sirdar *Mota Singh was the original leader and after his arrest* the leadership probably passed on to Kishen Singh. Bhagat Singh also wrote that while Sirdar Kishen Singhji desired to restrict the use of violence to self-defence only, the other more militant followers of his like Sri Karam Singh and Uday Singh, were in favour of offensive operations also, and ultimately it was their view that prevailed. Three of the Babbar Akalis – Sri Karam Singh, Dhanna Singh and Uday Singh, came forward to take up the entire responsibility for all actions committed by the members of the organisation in pursuance of its policy, on their own shoulders. They also vowed not to allow themselves to be arrested at any cost but to die fighting only, for the cause of the mother-land.[4]

The subsequent activities of the Babbar Akalis created a virtual terror in the hearts of the British rulers and their *'Jholi-chucks'*. The word *Babbar* in Punjabi means 'a big Lion' and truely they were lions in battle! Their movement was confined only to the doab region – i.e., the territory between the Sutlej and the Beas rivers in the Punjab province, consisting of the present Hoshiarpur district at the foothills of Shivalik, and Jullundur district. Even among these two districts, Hoshiarpur seems to have accounted for most of the recruits to this movement and for a great many violent activities.[5] This region was also in the forefront of the activities connected with the abortive uprising planned to take place on 19 February, 1915, by the co-ordinated leadership of Anushilan and Ghadar parties and many of the then martyrs hailed from this region.[6] The Babbars were mainly from the villages and many of them were ex-servicemen. In fact, it was their personal experience in the World War I that exposed the myth of British military superiority to their eyes and this prodded them to armed encounters with the British forces. Till the First World War, the British were not only feared but also respected since they were deemed to be a very virile and martial race. We saw that India made enormous contributions to the war efforts. After the War

many soldiers were demobilized and they returned to their native places. The Sikh Soldiers who thus returned began to unveil the myth of British military superiority before the public. They used to tell : "Look ! Europeans are in no way superior to us. We have seen British soldiers running away. They were afraid of the Germans. But we fought the Germans, defeated them sometimes and even captured them prisoners " So the atmosphere of fear towards British military capabilities began to slowly disappear.[7] Then occurred the most horrendous Jallianwallah Bagh massacre and its attendant convulsions. And in 1921, started the Gurudwara movement with a bang under the great influence of the non-co-operation movement. While the mainstream of Akalis were greatly influenced by the Congress and non-violence, these Babbar Akalis were rebels who used to openly propagate that 'the power which has been won from us by the sword should be taken back by the sword only.'[8]

Babbar Akalis were great patriots who believed in the necessity of supreme self-sacrifice for the liberation of the mother-land. But they had no clear-cut ideology save for the one and only point formula of driving away the British. In this they differed greatly with the later stream of revolutionaries represented by Bhagat Singh or the Kirthi Kisan Sabha. They also possessed normal human 'weaknesses' and were not free from drinking, co-habitation with women (at least with their own wives), etc. In this respect, Bhagat Singh and his comrades stood on a higher pedestal. They were generally not tempted by women or wine.[9]

The Babbar Akalis were great marksmen. They themselves were ex-service men or were trained by released military men, and fought with great determination and courage. Though they were uneducated in letters, they were not uneducated in heart. Their only desire was that Indians should rule Indians and they never aspired for any positions or careers for themselves. That way they were quite selfless. The present terrorists in Punjab are said to be mere pygmies compared with them, as also is the present Punjab police who are quite cowardly

compared with the then police. At that time, the C. I. D. was said to be working very efficiently, the police force was also quite honest and efficient, and they risked their lives in trying to apprehend the terrorists. Quite a number of policemen were actually killed in encounters [10]

This account will be somewhat lacking if we do not narrate the heroic deeds of at least some of the Babbar Akalis. The famous Dhanna Singh, a Jhat and a prominent Babbar Akali, was the resident of the same village Bahbalpur of Hoshirapur district to which Dr. Hari Singh belongs. Dr. Hari Singh was just a boy in the class IV when Dhanna Singh died at a nearby village and all of his villagers were reported to have gone to see the dead body of this martyr. Dhanna Singh was very brave and daring. He killed the Lambardar of the village, one Dara Singh, and then went on horse-back to the nearest police-station and pasted a poster (hand-written) on the gate of the police station that it was he who had killed the Lambardar and innocents should not be punished !! This Dhanna Singh was enticed by one of his friends (one Karam Singh of Mannahana, just 3 miles from Bahbalpur) and was taken to his house. That night Dhanna Singh was made to drink heavily by this traitrous friend who had already informed the police. In the early hours when the police party gheraoed his house, this 'friend' woke Dhanna Singh up (to display his 'sincerity'), and asked him to run away. Dhanna Singh was still in a strongly intoxicated state and while running he stumbled and fell down. The police swooped on him and tried to catch him. Now Dhanna Singh always concealed a bomb in his arm-pit (that was said to be generally the case with Babbar Akalis) and he pressed it. The bomb burst with a terrific explosion killing not only Dhanna Singh (a part of whose body was completely blown-up) but also a S.I. and 10 constables who swooped on him, and injured many other policemen !! [11].

Another hair-raising story is that of the martyrdom of Sri Karam Singh. At the age of 75 years, Sri Karam Singh moved and fought like a young lad of 18 years! When rounded up by a police party, Karam Singh and his three colleagues preferred certain death to surrender and engaged in a bitter exchange of

fire. When the ammunition at their disposal was exhausted, they jumped into the river nearby and tried to swim across to tha other side. But they were all killed by the steady rain of police bullets.[12]

Babbar Akalis, no doubt, stood as glorious examples of self-sacrifice, but they could not mobilise the ordinary people of the area into any struggles, their actions were isolated from mass struggles and mass support, and they were one by one killed or apprehended in course of time without much protest from the masses. In 1924, Sirdar Kishen Singh and others were charged with what is known as the 'Babbar Akali conspiracy case'under sections 121 A, 120 B coupled with 302, 395 etc. of I. P. C. In all—

> Ninety-one accused were put on trial before the Sessions Judge. Three died during the hearing of the case, there was insufficient proof, according to the assessors, against 21 accused. Thus 67 accused were found guility by the assessors of charges framed against them.
>
> The Sessions Judge pronounced judgement on the 28 February. He found 54 accused guilty and sentenced five of them to death (Kishan Singh, leader of the Babbar Akalis, Babu Santa Singh, Nand Singh, Dalip Singh and one another),11 to transportation for life and 38 to various terms of imprisonment ranging from seven to three years, and three months solitary confinment each, with fines. Thirty-four accused were acquitted.
>
> The convicted accused on hearing their sentences, raised loud shouts "Sat Sri Akal", while leaving the court room. The Five accused who were sentenced to death were concerned in the following offences :—
>
> Kishan Singh for being the chief of the conspiracy ; Karam Singh and Nand Singh for the murder of Subedar Gainda Singh of Ghurial ; Babu Santa Singh one of the chief conspirators being responsible for one murder

singlehanded and complicity in several other murders, robberies and dacoities; Dalip Singh, a youth of 18, for several murders and other offences.

Of the 11 accused sentenced to transporation for life, five are considered by the judge to be leading members of conspiracy to commit murder.

Of the remaining six, three are concerned in murder and dacoity at Nangal Shaman, two are concerned in the Jailla dacoity and the murder of the devan and one is concerned in the murder of subedar Gainda Singh of Ghurial. [13]

On appeal, the death sentences on the original five were not only confirmed, but another's – Sri Dharam Singhji's conviction was also enhanced to sentence of death !! Their mercy petitions were rejected and all of them were hanged in the central jail, Lahore, on 27 February, 1926, while the whole city was wild with the festivities of 'Holi'. Only a small crowd of mourners took the dead bodies to the cremation grounds and the final rites were completed without any ostentation. [14]

Only after their suppression and martyrdom, Babbar Akalis began to receive some sort of recognition and popularity among the militant sections of Sikhs, especially those residing abroad. Petrie informs us that even when their movement was alive, they received about £ 1000 from Comintern sources through one Mota Singh. [15] He characterizes the Babbar Akali campaign of 1922–23 as that of a band of Sikhs, of the professional gun-men and ruffian type, who ran *amok* throughout two large districts in the Central Punjab, ruthlessly murdering loyalists and government supporters and establishing a wide spread reign of terror ! [16] Of course, it is but natural for a British officer to look down upon their deeds and turn a blind eye to their virtues. It is true that both Dhanna Singh and Dalip Singh were dacoits before they became Babbar Akalis, but once they joined the movement, there seems to be no example of their working with any other selfish motive save that of acquiring the glory of martyrdom

for the cause of their mother-land. As Petrie rightly remarked after the suppression of this movement, the Babbar Akali cult became quite popular among the Sikhs living abroad – in U. S. A., in Canada or in China, [17] and huge amounts were donated to the Desh Bhagat Pariwar Sahayak Committee which was intended to provide relief to the bereaved families of the Babbar Akali martyrs also The Kirthi Kisan Party, though it did not subscribe to the cult, glorified them as martyrs to the cause of the mother-land and so did Sirdar Bhagat Singh and his comrades.

BENGAL AND THE 'NEW VIOLENCE' PARTY

The sudden suspension of the civil disobedience movement following the Chauri Chaura outbreak which meant the virtual withdrawal of the non-co-operation movement, sent a series of shock waves through the revolutionary circles in Bengal as well as through the militant non-co-operators. The former who were preponderant in the political groups of Bengal never had any illusions about the efficacy of non-violence but even they were not prepared for this sudden *volte-face* of the Mahatma. All the revolutionary groups – especially the two main groups of Anushilan and Juganathar, scrupulously refrained from any overt acts of violence during 1920–22, and used the breathing space for mass contacts, re-grouping, fresh recruitments, collection of arms and ammunition, and consolidation of the respective organisations. So, even immediately after the Chauri Chaura *volte-face*, they were not strictly in a mood or position to start any overt violent activities.

Perhaps another reason might also have been behind this rather' pensive' mood of the leaders of these revolutionary groups. With all the dedication, hard work, self-sacrifice and patriotism shown by them, they were not able to make any considerable head-way in rousing the masses to action. Their individual acts of violence only rebounded upon them in he form of great repression and from time to time they were put out of action by the hangman's noose or long years of incarceration. For the first time during the non-violent non-co-opera

tion movement, they witnessed the efficacy of mass struggles and the enormous potential inherent in the hitherto looked down 'commoners'. So, naturally, they were contemplating the best policies and methods to be adopted to make the *revolutionary* consciousness generalized and bring people in thousands and lakhs onto the platform of revolutionary action. The method of individual terrorism no longer appealed to them so strongly as in the past, though they did not rule it out altogether. In Tilak's words, these yesterday's extremists were getting a bit 'moderate' by the wisdom of their bitter experience.

But the more militant and young sections among the revolutionaries were growing impatient and were craving for some sort of action. The Anushilan which was a centralized and a more rigidly disciplined party, could stem the tide of revolt from the ranks for the time being though an 'Advance group' emerged even in that party by 1924-25. We will also see later that the main revolutionary organization, the Hindustan Republican Association of North India, which was but an offshoot of the Anushilan in the beginning, developed into an autonomous unit engaging itself in overt violent acts within a short period. But the *Juganthar* was not a party in the real sense. It was at the best a federation of various revolutionary groups and was shaken very much by the convulsions of the day. From it emerged a very active but small group of revolutionaries called, by the police, as the 'New Violence' party.

We have already referred to the *Atmonnati Samiti* formed in 1897 which later federated itself to the Juganthar group. Bepin Behari Ganguli and Jyotish Chandra Ghosh were prominent leaders of this group, and one Santhosh Mitra was a budding but very militant young leader of the group in 1923-25. Under his initiative and great organizational capacities, a militant group wedded to overt violent actions took shape under the overall leadership of Professor Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, the right-hand man of Bipin Behari Ganguli. But it should be mentioned here that it had nothing to do with Bepin Behari Ganguli himself who was averse to any resumption of violent activities and was one of the 'old guards' of the Juganthar party. Anyway, this new group under the guidance of Jyotish

Ghosh, but under the practical and immediate leadership of Santhosh Mitra, indulged in a series of violent activities which plunged the upto then tranquil (tranquil in the sense that violent activities were absent) political atmosphere of Bengal into great convulsion.[18] This Santhosh Mitra was also in touch with the latest political developments and was quite influenced by the nascent Bolshevik propaganda at that time. In 1924, he was reported to have helped Abani Mukherji to come out of his 'shelter' in Calcutta where the Juganthar leaders were said to have held him a virtual prisoner. The naturally grateful Abani Mukherji gave him a valuable contact for receiving smuggled arms[19] which, however, could not be made use of by him or his associates due to unavoidable reasons.

To come to the year 1923, the Santhosh Mitra group started the old type of violent activity in and around Calcutta and committed dacoities at Kona (Howrah), Ultadanga and Garpar (both in Calcutta), and at Sankaritola post office (Calcutta).[20] The Kona dacoity committed in May 1923, was said to have marked the opening of the campaign of terrorism by the revolutionaries. But it is interesting to note that the Jury at that time had to return a verdict of not guilty in this case and the *Calcutta Weekly Notes* showed that the dacoity was based on a family quarrel and that the approver, who said that he had driven a car, could not do so.[21] But now it seems beyond doubt that even this dacoity was committed by revolutionaries only, that too by the Santhosh Mitra Group only. Thereafter, the Government on the basis of abundant secret information it had from its very efficient C.I.D. and police informer system, moved with great alacrity and invoked a century-old Regulation III of 1818, and arrested a number of prominent revolutionaries in a sudden swoop on 25 September, 1923. Amritlal Sarkar, Rabindra Mohan Sen Gupta, Satish Chandra Pakrashi, Manmohan Bhattacharya, Upendranath Banerji, Jiban Lal Chatterji, Bhupati Mazumdar, Ramesh Chandra Datta Chaudhuri, Manoranjan Gupta, Jyotish Chandra Ghosh, Atindra Mohan Roy Chaudhuri, Bhupendra Kumar Dutta, Amarendra Nath Chatterji, and Gopal Mukherji were arrested on that fateful night or shortly afterwards. Two communists – Muzaffar

Ahmed (arrested on 17 May itself) and Nalini Nath Gupta (arrested on 20 December, 1923) were also detained under the Regulation III of 1818. However, the Government did not consider it, in public interest, desirable to publish the charges put to these State Prisoners.[22]

It is quite interesting to note that the list of the arrested included almost all the top leaders of the Anushilan and Jugan-thar groups who had no connection at all with the activities of the Santhosh Mitra group and naturally they were very much angered at Santhosh Mitra and his comrades. Thus, there developed much bad blood between the 'New Violence' party and the Juganthar as well as the Anushilan leaders. This was more pronounced in the case of the Juganthar leaders who were furious that some of their own followers should create such a critical situation for them.

The Chittagong group of revolutionaries under Anuroop Sen and Surya Sen also took a cue and started violent activities in their division. The arrests of prominent leaders under Regulation III did not affect the resumption of these violent activities under new leaders who were not yet prominently in the 'books' of the police. The Chittagong group was greatly hampered by a lack of funds to purchase arms and ammunition.

> Partial Solution was found by the most memorable incident of 1923 – the daring exploits of the most efficient and beloved disciple of Surya Sen, the revolutionary Ananta Singh. He, along with a few comrades held up the Victoria (horse-drawn) coach of the then Assam–Bengal Railways carrying in cash to the tune of Rs 21,000/– with guards and cash staff, in broad day-light Even without firing a single shot whisked away with the carriage and cash. The money was sent to Calcutta for purchase of arms in two instalments. But soon Police were on their heals and after a few days when Masterda and others were also present in the hide-out, the Police encircled the place. But the revolutionaries after an open encounter managed to break the Police cordon and took shelter in the

> Nagarkhana hill There after picthed battle, Ananta Singh and others managed to escape The police, however, arrested Masterda and Ambica Chakrabarty. After a month Ananta Singh was also arrested at Calcutta but police could not secure any punishment for any of them. All were, however, released [23]

It is known now from reliable sources that both Surjya Sen and Ambica Chakravarthy swallowed potassium cyanide pills when they were arrested and fell unconscious, but they did not die only because the cyanide was spurious and immediate medical care was provided by the Police !! It is said that accidents give crucial turns to the history of mankind and this proposition was vindicated by this pleasant 'accident' saving the lives of the two revolutionaries who were destined to play so crucial a role in the revolutionary movement of Bengal in the 1930's In addition to the above acts by the Chittagong group,

> An attempt was made to decoy from his house one of the chief witnesses in the robbery case with the intention of murdering him ; and on the next evening a sub-inspector who had arrested one of the accused in this case and knew the others by sight was shot at Chittagong [24]

But the most sensational and daring event occurred in January 1924, when one Gopinath Saha shot at and killed a European, Mr. Earnest Day, and wounded three Indian chauffeurs, who pursued and caught him.

> Later investigations proved that the murder was a result of mistaken identity for Gopinath wanted to kill Mr. Tegart, the Police Commissioner of Calcutta, who, owing to his alleged cruelty and high handeness towards Bengali political prisoners, was a marked man of the Bengali anarchist . . .. In his trial Gopinath stood up boldly confessing the objective of his action and called upon the young Bengal to follow in his steps, saying : "I fail to complete the work [murder of Tegart], I leave the unfinished work for others.', His last words were : "May every drop of my blood

> sow the seeds of freedom in every home of India." ... Gopinath was eventually sentenced to death and hanged on March 1st.[25]

Gopinath Saha displayed exemplary courage, self-composure and devotion to the cause throughout the trial and till his death.

> He wrote to his mother not to lament but to be proud of a son like his, and expressed the hope that every mother might bear a fearless son like him. During the period of a month and a half that he was in jail. his weight increased by five pounds ... The courage and self-sacrifice of Gopimohan were highly appreciated by the congress leaders and a resolution to this effect was passed by the Bengal provincial conference at Sirajgung. ..[26]

He was said to have written the following sentence on one of the walls of his cell, that there was no place for non-violence in the field of Indian politics –

भारतीय राजनीति क्षेत्रे अहिम्सार स्थान नेई।

(Bharatiya Rajaniti Kshetre Ahimsar Sthan Neyi).[27]

The martyrdom of Gopinath Saha created great commotion, admiration and inspiration in Bengal political circles, and a resolution was passed in the Bengal provincial conference of the Congress at Serajgunje on 1 June, 1924, to the extent that:

> This conference, while denouncing and dissociating itself from violence and adhering to the principle of non-violence, appreciates Gopinath Saha's ideal of self-sacrifice, misguided though it is in respect of the country's best interest, and expresses respect for his self-sacrifice.

The effects of this resolution which was unanimously passed by the Serajgunje conference,

> ... were electrical. It became by far the most potent instrument for organization, and a perpetual incitement to the youth of Bengal to take to violent way.[28]

Here it is to be noted that Gopinath Saha belonged to the *Santhosh Mitra group* which was despised by both the Jugantar and Anushilan parties, but his supreme salf-sacrifice had made their heads bow with respect and admiration. The Serajgunje resolution is also a pointer to the fact that in Bengal non-violence had no appeal to the masses and that the revolutionaries were the main force even in the Congress party there.

The 'apostle of non-violence' was very much pained by the Serajgunje resolution and moved the following resolution on 29 June, 1924, at the AICC meeting at Ahmedabad:—

> The All India Congress Committee regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family and though deeply sensible for the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the All India Congress Committee strongly condemns this and all such political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the Congress creed and its resolutions of Non-violent Non-co-operation, and of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj and interfere with the preparations for Civil Disobedience which, in the opinion of the All India Congress Committee, is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.[29]

Then Mr. C. R. Das moved an amendment to it which was a verbatim reproduction of the Serajgunje resolution. He strongly pleaded for its acceptance making it clear that had it not been for the vulgar threat of Regulation III of 1818 directed against him and others who were responsible for the Serajgunj resolution, he would not have brought forward an amendment and much less one in identical terms as the Serajgunje resolution, as in the present instance. He urged the delegates that, if only as a manly answer to the bluff, they should accept his amendment. Mr. Das was seconded by Dr. Paranjpey.[30]

Mr. Das' amendment was finally declared lost, with seventy voting for and seventy eight against. Mr. Gandhi's original resoultion was then carried by a bare majority. But Mahatma Gandhi was humble and honest enough to consider this victory of his as a defeat in fact. He said :

> ... the fourth resolution, however, completed my defeat. It is true that the Gopinath resolution was carried by a bare majority. A clear minority would have pleased me more than a narrow majority ...... I undoubtedly regard the voting, as a triumph for Mr. Das, although he was apparently defeated by eight votes. That he could find 70 supporters out of 148 who voted, had a deep significance for me. It lighted the darkness... [31]

Perhaps the Mahatma surmised by his uncanny instinct that more number of people might have voted for his resolution with blind obedience to, and great admiration for, his personality than those who might have voted for C. R. Das only in consideration for the vulgar threat of arrest of C. R. Das and others who were responsible for the Serajgunje resolution.

Now to come back to the terrorist activities in Bengal—in March, 1924,

> ...a bomb factory, fully equipped with explosives and implements for loading and fitting bomb-shells (for which a number both loaded and unloaded were found) was discovered in Calcutta. The bombs showed a marked advance on anything which had previously come to light. In this case two youths were sentenced to seven years transportation each. About the same time, a young bhadralok, Promode Kumar Nag of Dacca, was severely injured while handling explosives at Faridpur. Shells and chemicals were found in his house and he was eventually convicted to six years' rigorous imprisonment. In April an attempt on the life of Mr. Bruce was made. In July a well-known terrorist was arrested in the streets of Calcutta with a fully loaded revolver in his

> possession. At the end of July 'Red Bengal' leaf lets made their appearance. The first issue announced the initation of a campaign of assassination of police officers ; the second impressed on the political leaders of Bengal the need for the existence of an active violence party. This was followed in August by the explosion of a bomb in Mirzapur street in an attack on an informer, who escaped. One bystander was, however, killed and another injured. The man who actually threw the bomb was pursued and seized, and another arrest was made on the spot at the same time. Apart from these, Government were in possession of information to show that, during the year 1924, the conspirators attempted to assassinate police officers, high Government officials, and suspected members of their own organisations. No less than five such attempts were made between July and October, and the escape of the intended victims could only be regarded as providential. In some cases the would-be assassins suspected police vigilance, in other they were thwarted by the unexpected movements of their intended victims. [32]

All these activities definitely posed a grave threat to the then British government, but it unwisely provoked a greater public outcry by having recourse to extreme measures and arbitrary ordinances. Again let us quote from the intelligence report of the Government :

> The situation towards the end of 1924 had therefore become one of considerable anxiety. The existence of a widespread revolutionary movement was hardly disputed, indeed it was admitted by Mr. C. R. Das, the Swarajist leader, himself. It was daily increasing in strength, and, as in the years before 1916, ordinary measures had failed to check it. The local Government felt bound, therefore, to meet the menace by obtaining from the Governor-General the issue of an Ordinance (vesting) the executive with powers similar to those they had under the Defence of India Act. On the early

> morning of the 25th October 1924, simultaneously with the promulgation of the ordinance, action was taken against the more prominent revolutionaries under the Ordinance and under Regulation III of 1818. Sixty-nine persons were arrested that day and twelve others later, while searches were conducted at numerous places in Bengal. The raid yielded nothing in the way of arms, ammunition and explosives, but in thirty-three places revolutionary literature was found, and the immediate object of the raid was fulfilled. The revolutionary organisations and their campaign were for the time thoroughly dislocated and disorganised. While the secret parties were attempting to re-organise and recover from the effects of the blow dealt them, all Indian political parties, organisations and newspapers indulged in a systematic campaign of vilification or disapproval against the new weapon which the Government had brought into use. [33]

It may be true that prominent swarajist leaders were also connected with the revolutionary movement, and it may even be true that Subhas Chandra Bose was behind the plot to assassinate Sir Charles Tegart, and it is now generally acknowledged that, at any rate, Subhas Bose had given employment to a large number of Juganthar revolutionaries and ex-detenus under the Calcutta Corporation. It is also true as alleged by the then Intelligence reports that this provided great monetary relief to the secret societies which no longer needed to embark on dacoities even for their day to day existence. But all this only shows to what a pitch feelings against the foreign government were incited, and how widespread the revolutionary movement to overthrow the foreign rule was becoming day by day.

The arrest of Subhas Chandra Bose and two prominent swarajist members of the Bengal Legislative Council, Mr. Anil Baran Roy and Mr. S. C. Mitra, under Regulation III of 1818, and a large number of others – real congressmen, revolutionaries in the Swaraj party, etc., under the newly promulgated Bengal ordinance, raised a huge outcry from the people of India. Hundreds of public meetings were held in Bengal and

other provinces, in protest against this measure and the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1925, introduced by the Government, was thrown out on 7 January, 1925. But by virtue of the extra-ordinary powers given to the Governor under the constitution, he was able to certify the bill as law.[34] Upon this the Central Legislative Assembly passed a resolution introduced by Mr. Doraiswamy Iyengar, for the supercession of the Bengal ordinance by an Act of Legislature, by 58 against 45 votes.[35] On 23 March, Sir Alexander Muddiman moved the introduction of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act Supplementary Bill which was necessitated by the fact that certain provisions of the Bengal Ordinance such as those affecting the jurisdiction of the High Court and affecting the territories outside Bengal, were beyond the scope of the Bengal Legislarure. This bill was also thrown out twice by the Central Assembly. Thereupon the Viceroy certified that it was quite essential for the tranquillity of Bengal and it was taken into consideration by the Upper House on 26 March, 1925, and was passed.[36]

This Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act was to remain in force for five years Under it, prominent revolutionaries including Santosh Mitra were put behind the bars. The stern measures taken by the government told heavily upon the revolutionary movement in Bengal and overt violent activities showed a marked decline in the next four to five years.

> Between the issue of the Ordinance in 1924 and the end of 1928 only one murder by terrorists occurred, only 187 persons were dealt with under the Act, and by September, 1928, all had been set free, although a certain number remained for some time longer under restriction order limiting their movements. When the Act expired in 1930, no use had been made of the special powers for the purpose of making fresh arrests for nearly three years. This result was made possible by the recognition on the part of the terrorist leaders that while the Act remained in force, they were not sufficiently well-organised to conduct a campaign

against Government. It was not an indication that terrorist activities had ceased.[37]

The only overt violent activity after the passage of the Ordinance seems to be the occurrence of the Dakshineswar and Shorabazar bomb cases in 1925, which were said to be a part and parcel of the conspiracy in which the Hindustan Republican Association in the United and Central Provinces was the prime factor, and the duty of the Bengal section was to keep the Upper Indian Organization supplied with arms and ammunition.[38] Pramode Chaudhury who was arrested in the Dakshineswar Bomb Case, killed in jail Bhupen Chatterjee, Superintendent of Police. In September 1926, he along with Ananta Hari Mitra of Nadia was hanged to death. Pramode Chaudhury was the first martyr of Chittagong. By that time Masterda (Surya Sen) was arrested in the streets of Calcutta.[39] The revolutionary activities in Bengal could again make a head way only after the release of the imprisoned leaders by the end of 1928.

Before we end our discussion on the 'New Violence' Party and other revolutionary organisations upto 1928, we have to make note of a curious but deplorable accusation against the 'New Violence' Party. Important Juganthar leaders like Bhupendra Kumar Dutt and Jibanlal Chatterji wrote to the Secretary of State for India that their organisation, i. e , the Juganthar, had nothing to do with the then violent activities of the 'New Violence' Party and that the activities seemed to be the deeds of *Agents Provocateurs.* Even Subhas Bose was said to be cross with Santhosh Mitra since he (Mitra) revolted against B. B. Ganguly and weaned away many militants in Calcutta from the Juganthar to his own group. Subhas was also said to have joined the chorus of those slandering Santhosh Mitra and his comrades as *Agents Provocateurs.*[40] It is quite interesting to note that even Pandit Motilal Nehru in his forceful speech on the floor of the Central Legislative Assembly in support of the afore-mentioned resolution of Mr. Doraiswami Iyengar, harped on this point for a considerable length of time.

The Home Member had, the other day, expressed his indignation at the mention of the agents provocat-

eur. This was what Sir Reginald Clarke, ex-Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, had written to *The Times.* "I have had much experience of those agencies in the East, and often wonder whether they do not raise more devils than they lay. One has to use them [Police informers] to fight anarchy, but their inevitable concomitants, the *Agents Provocateur* and the *Letter de Cachet,* alienate public opinion to such an extent that they can never be continued for long."

Pandit Motilal further quoted from .... memorial, stating that a certain agent provocateur was looked up in a gaol and gave secret information from the gaol that, during non co-operation days, this person was trying to incite youngmen to form a party of violence. The memorialists believe that whatever violence had been committed in Bengal was due to innocent men duped by this *Agent Provocateur,* and further, that this agent's name leaked out in an identification parade in connection with the Alipore conspiracy case, and it came out in court, and that his name had been penned through and that of an accussed put instead for obvious reasons. The point was not pressed by the Counsel for the defence. Pandit Motilal asked whether, in the face of these facts, the Home Member would feel any indignation at the mention of *agents provocateur.* People in the country thought that there were such agents.[41]

Of course, there should have been some or many *agents provocateurs* considering the great efficiency of the CID and informer systems of those days. The 'all-knowing and all-powerful' British Intelligence department would have been very much lacking if it were not so. But we do not exactly know who exactly these *agents provocateurs* were, and what exactly was the amount of mischief done by them. This is indeed a very imporant and interesting field where nothing much has been ploughed till now. But by all accounts available till now, the accusations hurled against Santhosh Mitra and

his comrades seem to be, to say the least, without any sound basis. Santosh Mitra and his group took to the organising of labour after their release in 1928; and imprisoned again during 1930, Santhosh Mitra was killed in a police firing inside the Hijli detention camp in 1931. Subhas Bose seems to have had very much regretted his past behaviour towards this martyr and was said to have gone to Santhosh Mitra's mother and apologised. [42]

UPPER INDIA AND THE HINDUSTHAN REPUBLICAN ARMY

We have already seen that Benares was the nucleus of revolutionary activities in the United Provinces and in a way in the whole of Upper India, and Sachindranath Sanyal was the real leader and organizer of the revolutionary movement there During 1914–15, Sachindranath Sanyal's group practically amalgamated itself with the Anushilan and worked under the over-all leadetship of Rash Behari Bose. The failure of the plans for a general uprising was followed by a spate of conspiracy cases all over India and Benares too received its share. Sachindranath Sanyal was sentenced to transportation for life and was released in early 1920 by the Royal Amnesty. While in jail, he wrote an autobiographical account of the revolutionary movement under the title 'Bandi Jiban', in Bengali, which was subsequently translated into Hindi and Gurumukhi and ran into many editions. Sachindranath Sanyal with his book 'Bandi Jiban' stood like a light-house attracting innumerable patriotic youth on the 'high seas' towards the shores of the revolutionary movement.

It would be highly unjust for anyone to have expected any immediate revival of the revolutionary movement which was badly shattered during 1915–16. Moreover, the period 1920–22, was virtually the *time of Gandhi* and all revolutionaries suspended their violent activities in admiration of, and respect towards, Mahatma Gandhi, to whose non-violent 'experiment' they wanted to give a chance. But as already noticed this did not preclude them from re-grouping, consolidating and recruiting fresh cadres. As far as upper India was

concerned it was Sachindranath Sanyal who took the initiative to re-organize the revolutionary party.

> His methods were to choose likely youths and interest them in his book 'Bandi Jiwan', which gave an account of terrorist movements and activities upto 1915 in such a way as to arouse their immature minds to similar action An authority said of this book — "it is one of the best known gemss of terrorist literature" — and another, "The author has sent more youngmen to the prison for terrorism than any man who has lived in India." By 1923, Sachindra Sanyal had made considerable progress, and in 1924 he went into hiding in Bengal, having passed on the work of organisation to Jogesh Chandra Chatterji, another Bengali who had come to Benares in 1923. [43]

It is clear from this account that Sachindra Sanyal was the initiator of the process of a revival of the revolutionary movement in U. P. After the Chauri Chaura *volte-face* of the Mahatma, he and his comrades had great opportunity to propagate revolutionary ideas extensively as also to recruit many discontented militants of the non-co-operation movement into their ranks.

One such young recruit who afterwards rose to the position of the Commander-in-Chief of the Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army and courted glorious martydom in battle was Chandrasekhar Azad, the Great. Though a digression, it will be valuable here to sketch a brief life-history of this unforgettable revolutionary. He belonged to a remote village, Bhabhra in the present province of Madhya Pradesh. He was brought up in the medieval customs and traditions prevalent in his family and village, and from childhood developed a rebellious attitude towards these suffocating traditions. When he was 13 to 14 years old, he fled away from these surroundings to Bombay where he eked out a living by hard work as a labourer and after some months left Bombay and went to Benares to learn Sanskrit. Being a brahmin boy, it was not difficult for him to get some accomodation and food and enrol himself in a

(private) Sanskrit school. Though he intended to learn Sanskrit grammar, it seems he never acquired even an optimum knowledge of Sanskrit and he was severed from this 'boring and bitter' process of learning by the advent of the non-co-operation movement. He joined as a volunteer in the movement and participated actively in all the non-violent activities. He was arrested and brought before a Magistrate. At that time it was customary for non-co-operators not to engage any defence and declare their non-co-operation with the judiciary also. But Azad was not a boy to give any stereotyped replies. His ingenuity burst forth when he answered haughtily to the questions of the Magistrate:

> What is your name? — My name is Azad!
>
> Your father's name? — Swadhin !!
>
> Your residence? — Prison-house !!!

The young magistrate was very much angered by this impudence of a boy (Chandrasekhar was then just 15 years old) and ordered 15 stripes on his buttocks *(baenths)* as punishment. He was taken to the jail where the punishment was administered.[44]

> At every strike he shouted 'Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai'. The *Maryada*, a paper edited by Sampurnanand, published his photograph with the caption: "Fearless Boy Azad." He was given an ovation at a mammoth meeting at Gyanbapi at Benares. ... suddenly the non-co-operation movement was called off after the Chauri Chaura incident. Like thousands, Azad too was disappointed. ... He very soon found his way into the revolutionary party. Since the day he joined the movement he poured all his heart into the work and as long as he lived, he remained in the forefront of their activities.[45]

While Sachindra Sanyal and his associates at Benares were striving to again build up the revolutionary movement in Upper India, it seems the central Anushilan Organization of

Bengal sent an emissary, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, to organize its branches in U P. We do not know exactly how he was received by Sanyal. But this much is certain that, willingly or unwillingly, these two stalwarts worked together for a considerable period of time and built up the premier revolutionary organization of Northern India – the Hindustan Republican Association (H.R A.).

There is much obscurity on the point as to when and how exactly this H. R. A. originated. An official history of the Anushilan Samiti places the work and position of Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee on a higher pedestal than that of Sachindra Sanyal. But at the same stretch it admits that

> Some differences cropped up between Jogesh Chatterjee and Sachindranath Sanyal ... Sanyal insisted that for working outside Bengal, even as a unit of Anushilan, some other party name was required. Chatterjee had no instructon from central leadership to start an organization under a new name and so he could not accept Sanyal's proposition. Ultimately, Trailokya Nath Chakravarty (Maharaj) resolved the dispute by advising Chatterjee to accept Sanyal's formula, the revival of north Indian organisation of the Anushilan under a new name was thus agreed upon, and after some discussions in which some top leaders took part, the name Hindusthan Republican Association was selected [46]

Finally, the H.R.A. was formed as an off-shoot of the Anushilan. The foundation meeting took place in the village Bholachang of Brahmanbaria sub-division in Tippera district (the present Tripura state), East Bengal, in the presence of Pratul Ganguly, Narendra Mohan Sen, Sachindranath Sanyal, and probably Jogesh Chandra Chattetjee too. Sri Manmathnath Gupta gives an interesting explanation. He says that he was active in the revolutionary organisation right from 1922-23. The same organisation under which he was working grew wide and strong in course of time and attained the name of H. R. A. It was not as if H.R.A. emerged on one fine day as a North Indian

branch of the Anushilan. It would be more correct to say that it was born in Benares long before it was christened in the above-mentioned village of Bengal. Sri Gupta also seems to put the work and achievement of Sachindra Sanyal on a higher pedestal than that of Jogesh Chatterjee.[47]

In our opinion, though technically it is true that H. R. A. was a child of Anushilan, yet in practice, it was a very 'recalcitrant' child. It was working quite independently and in a novel fashion. It seems to be the first revolutionary organisation which decided to formulate a written constitution for itself, and it is also the first among revolutionary organisations to take a definite turn towards Socialism and Bolshevism. It is curious to note that much before the formation of H R.A , both Jogesh Chatterjee and Sachindra Sanyal maintained contacts with M.N. Roy, who was then abroad as an already convinced communist and was feverishly trying to organize a Communist Party in India by contacting his old revolutionary colleagues. Both Sachindra Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee seem to have been very much influenced by the Bolshevik revolution and the communist creed. But they, and especially Sanyal, could not gulp the philosophy of materialism and were ready to accept communism minus atheism. Sanyal seems to have been the chief theoretician and over-all organiser of H.R.A , whereas Jogesh Chatterjee also played a prominent part in the practical organizational work of extension and consolidation as also in leading the action parties. Anyhow, it is beyond doubt that in its practical functioning, H.R.A. was a very independent body and it soon had outgrown its parent body (Anushilan) and occupied the status of a premier revolutionary organisation in Northern India.

By the end of 1924, H.R.A had developed quite rapidly in U.P. and also had its extensions in Bihar and Punjab. Sachindra Sanyal was said to have paid several visits to Punjab in 1924 and claimed to have enlisted many students of the Lahore Colleges. He was also said to have helped the drafting of the rules and regulations of the *Sanjiwal* association of Punjab.[48] Jogesh Chatterjee seems to have involved himself in the organisation of labouring masses as far back as in 1921

when he actively took part in the famous Assam–Bengal Railway Strike in 1921, and in February, 1922. he founded his 'House of Labourers' running it on socialistic lines.[49] He introduced this line of work into the activities of H.R.A. and was said to have involved himself with one Suresh Bhattacharji, the sub-editor of the *Vartaman,* in work among the labouring classes. This Suresh Bhattacharji was closely connected to Satyabhakta who announced the establishment of an Indian Communist Party towards the end of 1923 (and who later convened the famous Communist Conference of 1925 at Kanpur).

> Indeed the view has been put forward that this Indian Communist Party set up at Cawnpore was a direct result of the revolutionary conspiracy known as the Hindustan Republican Association.[50]

It is quite noteworthy that in the programme of the H.R.A., priority was also given to start labour and peasant organizations and it was directed to instil in their [labourers' and peasants'] minds that they are not for the revolution but that the revolution is for them (the influence of M.N. Roy and his dictum – the Bolshevik dictum, 'not masses for revolution' but 'revolution for masses' is quite obvious).[51] In the leaflet, *Revolutionary,* written by Sachindranath Sanyal and distributed all over India from Peshawar to Rangoon *in one day,* it was clearly stated that the revolutionary party "follows the footsteps of the great Indian Rishis of the glorious past and of Bolshevik Russia in the modern age." The immediate object of the revolutionary party was said to be the establishment of a Federal Republic of the United States of India, but one of the basic principles was said to be the abolition of all systems which make the exploitation of man possible.[52]

By the end of 1924,

> ... organisers were acting in 23 districts of U. P. and the remaining districts were grouped. About 100 members were ackowledged ... the organisation of the party in the U. P. was complete enough for the commission of dacoities, a method of raising funds in full accord with the principles and traditions

> of the revolutionaries. Three of these dacoities, at Bamrauli on Chistmas Day, 1924, at Bichpuri on the night of March 9/10th, 1925, and at Dwarakapur on May 24th, 1924, went untraced and unconnected with terrorists until the daring hold-up and looting of a train just after leaving Kakori station near Lucknow on the evening of August 9, 1925, raised suspicions that terrorists were responsible. At Bamrauli, the house of a well-to-do Brahmin was attacked and about Rs. 4,000 worth of loot was carried off. The dacoits, who were well armed, shot in cold blood a villager who dared to come out and fight. At Bichpuri, a house war ransacked and the dacoits again exihibited extreme callousness An approver later stated that 'Quicksilver', the society name for Chandra Shekhar Azad, who by now was an important member, la d a kukri on the neck of a child in order to force its mother to show where her valuables were hidden. He was dissuaded from murdering the child by Ram Prasad 'Bismil' who was in charge of the gang. Another woman had burning rags placed between her legs to make her speak and, once more, a man was shot dead. About Rs. 2,000 was looted from a house in Dwarkapur dacoity, in which, as usual, arms were freely used and in which, again as usual, professional 'badmashes' formed part of the gang Here too, a man was shot dead. [53]

It is doubtful how far we can believe this version in so far as the alleged cruelty of Azad is concerned since by nature Azad seems to be incapable of such cruelties. Sri Manmathnath Gupta does not refer to, let alone criticise, this version in his *Chandrashekhar Azad aur Unka Yug*. But he states that though they faced great hardships in these village dacoities, they could catch hold of only a pittance and hence the revolutionary party decided to put a full-stop to these village dacoities. [54]

It is quite interesting to note that both Jogesh Chatterjee and Sachindra Sanyal were arrested before these violent

actions gained full momentum. The former probably had no occassion to take part in any of the dacoities since he was arrested in October, 1924, at Calcutta on his way back from Pondicherry where he had been to see R. C. L. Sharma, one of M. N. Roy's agents. He was interned in jail under the Bengal Ordinance I of 1924. So too was Sachindra Sanyal who was arrested in February 1925. He was convicted to 2 years R. I. under section 124–A, I. P. C. for his 'seditious' leaflet *the Revolutionary* which we have referred to before, in September 1925. But Sachindra Sanyal seems to have shifted to (or had been deputed by Anushilan to look after) the organizational work in Calcutta in 1924 itself, and hence, it is doubtful whether he had himself anything to do with the above dacoities. Anyhow, before the second dacoity had taken place, he was in prison. Both Jogesh Chatterjee and Sanyal were later implicated in the famous Kakori Conspiracy case.

The revolutionaries who realized the futility of village dacoities now planned a bigger action to loot government treasury from a running train at Kakori, a small village in Lucknow district. The move was strongly opposed by Ashfaqullah who argued that hitherto whatever dacoities they committed were untraced and the police did not know of the existence of a revolutionary organisation or at least its involvement in the same. But once any bigger action, especially that of looting a bank or a government treasury is done, then the police would invariably sense something revolutionary behind it and its C. I. D. will be rapidly mobilised and the efforts of the organization would be foiled in no time. But the decision was taken by the central committee of which Ramprasad 'Bismil' and not Ashfaqullah was a member, and hence it had to be carried out. It is noteworthy that inspite of his difference of opinion, Ashfaqullah actively participated in the train dacoity as a disciplined soldier and it was he who at last succeeded in breaking open the safe.[55] The warning words of Ashfaqullah proved prophetic and it is only after this train dacoity that the government came to know about a widespread revolutionary organization in the background and within a few months most of the leaders and activists of H R A. were rounded up and the back of the organization was temporarily broken.

First it was planned to loot the treasury while the train was halting at some Railway station But this plan demanded too meticulous and too prompt action and hence it was finally decided to stop train somewhere in the middle in a rural area and proceed with their action. On 9 August, 1925, all the ten revolutionaries travelled by the same No. 8 down train, three of them in II class and the rest in III class. At dusk, when the train was near Kakori Village, two revolutionaries in the II class compartment pulled the chain and stopped the train. Immediately all the revolutionaries got down and engaged themselves like machines in their pre-arranged works. Regular volleys were being fired from time to time along the sides of the train to scare away any passengers intending to get down. While Ashfaqullah was engaged in breaking open the safe containing money, another train, the Punjab mail, came running at a great speed from the opposite side. The revolutionaries at first were very much agitated but soon realized that there was no cause for any fear since the mail passed them in a second or so, and persisted in their work. At last the safe was broken up, the money bags were lifted and the revolutionaries disappeared towards their prearranged destinations in minutes. [56] About Rs 4,500/– came into the hands of the revolutionaries and during the action one passenger, Ahmed Ali, who did not heed the warnings and tried to get down was killed by one of the bullets which were regularly fired along the sides of the train. [57]

It is curious to note that after the dacoity almost all the participants returned back to their own houses and began to openly and fearlessly move as usual. Perhaps they were overconfident and thought that the police could never tear the veil of secrecy. So much so that the then supreme leader, Ramprasad 'Bismil', was rounded up from his own house at Shahjehanpur, and Manmathnath Gupta was also arrested at his residence in Benares. The actual participants in this train dacoity were ten in number, namely: 1. Ramprasad 'Bismil'; 2. Chandrasekhar Azad; 3. Mukundi Lal; 4. Kundanlal; 5. Banwarilal; 6. Murarilal; 7. Manmath Nath Gupta; 8. Ashfaqullah; 9. Rajendra Lahiri; 10. Sachindra Bakshi.

But in all, about 30 persons were apprehended in one day i. e., on 26 September, 1925, under the warrants issued by Mr. R.A. Horton of the C.I.D. Rajendra Lahiri was eventually arrested at Calcutta in November, 1925, in the Dakhineswar bomb case to which we have already referred. Towards the end of the year 1925, the police dropped the case against some of the arrested persons but sent up before Mr. Syed Ainuddin, Special Magistrate, 26 persons on a charge of conspiracy to commit dacoity with murder. Of these 26 persons, three remained absconding and two turned approvers. The special Magistrate committed all the remaining 21 persons to the Sessions.[58] We have already noted that Sachindra Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee who were interned under the Bengal Ordinance I of 1924, were also implicated in this case. Ashfaqullah and another were arrested later and tried in the supplementary Case Only Chandrasekhar Azad remained unapprehended to the last. It seems Bhagat Singh also took part in one of the dacoities prior to the Kakori train dacoity but his name did not come out because no approver knew his real identity. He went back to Lahore and began to work there in the political field openly. It was a grave mistake on the part of these revolutionaries to have been over-confident and move openly instead of going under-ground immediately. Of course, it was also due to the nascent stage of the revolutionary movement which could not teach them by experience. The order of professional revolutionaries was to come at a still later date, only after the bitter lesson of the Kakori conspiracy case (this was so at least in Upper India whereas in Bengal, professional revolutionaries were there since long).

On 6 April, 1927, judgement was delivered in the Kakori conspiracy case by Mr. A. H. De B. Hamilton, special Judge, Lucknow. A brief summary of the same is worth quoting here:

> The headquarters of the conspiracy was in Bengal from where the accused Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee came as an emissary to organize the U. P. branch. Jogesh was assisted by the accused G. C. Kar but ideas emanated principally from the accused Sachindranath Sanyal. The first seeds were planted in this province

in 1923; but the plant was well nourished by the accused Ramprasad and R. N. Lahiri. Ramprasad was the Chief of Staff in the United Provinces; but Lahiri, too, was a very important member and was the go-between for the headquarters in Bengal and U. P. branch. Dakshineswar and Shorabazar were part and parcel of this conspiracy, the duty of the Bengal section being to keep the Upper India organization supplied with arms and ammunition. The Judge further found that the members of the conspiracy committed the following dacoities to collect funds for the organization :— 1. Bamrauli dacoity committed on the 25th December, 1924; 2. Bichpuri dacoity committed on the 9th March, 1925; 3. Dwarakapur dacoity on the 24th May, 1925; 4. The train dacoity on the 9th August, 1925. The Judge further found that in the first two dacoities common criminals were enrolled to swell the number of dacoits.

In awarding sentences ... the Judge remarked :— I have been asked by the Public Prosecutor himself to temper justice with mercy in the case of those who are young and who have played but a secondary part in this conspiracy. In certain cases the Counsel has asked for mercy to be shown to a particular client and at the end the accused Sachindranath Sanyal made a similar request in general. I therefore think it right to say something on this subject.

I do believe myself that a great majority of the accused did join this conspiracy for no personal gain or advantage and that what they did as members of this conspiracy they did not do for the above purpose. Banwarilal has made certain accusations of dishonesty against Ram Prasad and the absconder Azad and Banarsi also had a suspicion against Ram Prasad. Whether they are justified or not I cannot tell. On the other hand it was the object of this conspiracy to effect armed revolution. The members of the conspiracy had arms and made bombs and this means murder. A

revolution as realized by the writer of the white leaflet himself means chaos. Chaos is an opportunity which professional criminals always take advantage of as local riots show and I do not for a moment believe that the members of this conspiracy could have stopped this. The property and life of the persons who either have nothing to do with the government or politics or who work for India in a manner which they consider better for the country than that chosen by the members of this conspiracy should be safeguarded. Then there are the dacoities from the evidence for the prosecution. It appears that persons joined this conspiracy knowing full well that dacoities would be committed. In two of these dacoities the conspirators joined forces with professional criminals. In each of the four dacoities a man was murdered. In considering the train dacoity, I take note of the fact that it is improbable that Ahmad Ali, who was shot, was deliberately aimed at. But nevertheless the shooting along the sides of the train showed a disregard of human life. I must also consider the fact that this conspiracy was a very important one extending beyond the U. P. When an appeal is made for mercy it is usual to attempt to satisfy the court that the person who has committed the offence has repented and therefore a lighter sentence will be a sufficient deterrent. The only accused from whose action I can infer such a sense of repentance is Banwari who has confessed. Whether there be other who have repented but who have said nothing either through fear of their companions or not wishing to say any thing against their companions, I am unable to say. I hope that there are and, if so, I recommend that the Government may consider that as I have done in the case of Banwari. Not knowing myself whether the accused on whose behalf application for mercy has been made do really repent, I cannot presume that they do.[59]

Finally, three – Ramprasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri, and Thakur Roshan Singh, were sentenced to death. Sachindranath Sanyal was transported for life (this was for the second time in his life!). Manmathnath Gupta was sentenced to 14 years R I, five got 10 years each (Jogesh Chatterjee being one of them), six sentenced to 5 years R I., two were acquitted and the two approvers, Banarasilal and Indubhushan Mitra (curiously both were of Shajehanpur – the place of the leader 'Bismil'). were pardoned.[60] Ashfaqullah was also sentenced to death some time later in the supplementary case. All the convicts jointly appealed to the Chief Court of Oudh and all the four sentences of death were confirmed by the High Court. Simultaneously, the sentences on five other appellants were enhanced (!), Manmathnath Gupta escaping this mercy of enhancement only because of his tender age. The date for hanging the four convicts was twice postponed but on 17 December, 1927, Rajendra Lahiri was first hanged at Gonda jail, and the rest were hanged on 19 December, 1927. It is still a mystery why Rajendra Lahiri was hanged two days earier. One explanation is that the jail authorities came to know about a meticulous plan to rescue Rajendra Lahiri before the date of hanging and hence, at their instance, the date was advanced by two days.[61]

It is to be noted that all the revolutionaries who were hanged displayed great composure and equanimity in the face of death. True, Ramprasad Bismil submitted mercy petitions to the Government and also persuaded an unwilling Ashfaq to do the same, but it was said to be more with a sense of exposing the sham of British justice which sentenced four people to death when it was not clear as to who were exactly responsible for the murders committed. In his final autobiographical sketch, hurriedly scribbled and smuggled out, 'Bismil' was said to have asked his countrymen not to put faith in any English Court and advised revolutionaries to issue forceful statements in courts in future, or altogether refrain from putting up any defence.[62] Ramprasad Bismil was all the time expecting that his colleagues – Azad and others who were at large and working outside, would somehow rescue him. He was also a

good poet and when all his hopes were shattered, was said to have written a poem as if he was addressing a lover and passing out his grief and despair.

Mit gaya jab mitnewala fir unka salam aya tho kya,
Dil ki barbadi ke bad unka payam aya tho kya

[what's the point in a man getting recognition (*Salam*—literally, respectful greeting) after he is dead, what's the point in her message reaching after the heart is completely broken].

So he started his poem and ended with these lines :

Ab na agle balbale hain, Aur na armanon ki bhid,
Fakth mar jane ki arzu, Yek dil-e-Bismil mein hai

(now there are no longer any 'bonds' or 'desires', one and only desire to die is left in the heart of Bismil).

This poem was thought to be a love sonnet and was forwarded through the Superintendent of the Jail, and it got published in a Hindi paper. The comrades outside understood the last desperate message of Bismil and were said to have wept bitterly over their inability to rescue him. Ashfaq was a jewel of a man. Tassaduk Hussain. the Police Superintendent paid many visits to Ashfaq and tried his best to entice him into the prosecution dragnet and make him a prosecution witness.

His main line of attack was that the revolutionaries were Hindus and they wanted a Hinduraj Ashfaq gave him a patient hearing and then said something which sent the official scurrying. "What you say is not true, I know; but even if it were true, I would prefer a Hindu raj to British raj". Ashfaq was also a poet and he went to the gallows with this couplet on his lips :

Tung aa kar hum bhi unke julm our bedad se,
Chal diya sue adam Zindane Fyzabad se.

(Being disgusted of their tyranny and injustice, I am departing to the land of death from Faizabad prison).[63]

He was said to have stepped to the gallows with a copy of the Koran tied round his neck. Thakur Roshan Singh also proved himself equally brave and composed till his death on the gallows with the Gita in his hand and 'Bande Matharam' on his lips.[64]

There was indignation and great grief all over India over these sentences. The Indian National Congress passed the following resolution:

> This Congress puts on record its sense of deep pain at the callous attitude of the government in not commuting the brutal sentence passed in the Kakori case against Sjts. Ramprasad Bismil, Rajendranath Lahiri, Ashfaqullah, and Roshan Singh, inspite of the powerful public indignation aroused by the vindictive sentences and appeals, offers its heart-felt sympathy to the families of the victims.

The 'Modern Review' also commented: "The execution of the four prisoners is a tragedy too deep for tears."[65]

From the time of the launching of the Kakori conspiracy case to some months after the transformation of H. R. A. into Hindusthan Socialist Republican Association (H. S. R. A.) in February, 1928, there seems to have been no overt violent activities by revolutionaries in Upper India. But this does not mean that the revolutionaries were totally suppressed After the back-breaking trauma of the Kakori conspiracy case and the consequent arrests, searches and persecutions, they were lying low for a long time. The only absconder in the Kakori conspiracy case, Chandrasekhar Azad, was very much active in the field, giving training to his comrades in shooting, horse-riding and other martial arts, and in re-grouping the scattered remnants of the revolutionary movement, and in endeavouring to enrol fresh recruits. In this he was greatly helped by Bhagat Singh, Bhagawati Charan, Sukhdev, Jatindas, etc., and we will deal with their activities just before and after the formation of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, in the next chapter.

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31. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, Vol, II, pp. 186–187.
32. *Terrorism in India*, op, cit , pp. 18–19.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 19.
34. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian struggle*, pp. 108–109.
35. *I. Q. R.*, 1925, Vol I, p. 178.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 249–254.
37. *Terrorism in India*, op. cit., p. 20.
38. *I. Q. R.*, 1927, Vol. I, Kakori conspiracy case Judgement.
39. *Chittagong Uprising : Some facts*, op, cit., p. 3.
40. *My interview with Comrade Anil Chatterji*, op.cit.
41. *I. Q. R.*, 1925, Vol. I, p. 177.
42. *My interview with Comrade Anil Chatterji*, op. cit.
43. *Terrorism in India*, op. cit., p. 69.

44. Manmathnath Gupta, *Chandra Sekhar Azad Aur Unka Yug*, Hyderabad, 1985, pp. 57–58.
45. Manmathnath Gupta, *History of the Indian revolutionary movement*, p. 106.
46. *Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samithi*, op cit., p 210.
47. *My interview with Sri Manmathnath Gupta*, dt. 9 March, 1986, New Delhi.
48. Petrie, David : *Communism in India, 1924–1927*, p. 139 and p. 147.
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50. Petrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 159–160.
51. *Terrorism in India*, op cit., p. 198.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 192.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70.
54. Manmathnath Gupta, *Chandrasekhar Azad* ... ... , p. 89.
55. Manmathnath Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 91–95.
56. *Ibidem.*
57. *I. Q. R., 1927*, Vol. I., January-June, p. 98.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–99.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 95–96.
61. Manmathnath Gupta., *op. cit.*, p. 147.
62. J. N. Vajpeyi, *The Extremist movement in India.*, p. 228.
63. Manmathnath Gupta, *History of* ... ... , op. cit., p. 111.
64. R. C. Mazumdar, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, p. 406.
65. J. N. Vajpeyi, *op cit.*, p. 229.

CHAPTER VII

BHAGAT SINGH, AZAD AND THEIR COMRADES

The revolutionary movement in the latter half of the third decade of the 20th Century in North India was dominated by the exploits of Comrades Bhagat Singh, Chandra Sekhar Azad, Bhagwathi Charan Vohra, etc., who worked through the premier revolutionary organization, the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, of Upper India. They were also instrumental in founding and making the best use of a youth organization called Naujawan Bharat Sahha, to further the interests of Revolution.

NAUJAWAN BHARAT SABHA

We learnt in the last chapter that though Bhagat Singh participated in one of the village dacoities prior to the Kakori train dacoity, his participation was never traced, and he was not implicated in the Kakori conspiracy case. Actually, the reason for Bhagat Singh to leave Punjab in 1924 was very personal – i.e., of avoiding his imminent marriage to perform which his father was dead-set. In Kanpur, he received support from Sri Ganesh Sankar Vidyarthi, Editor of *Pratap*, and also Jogesh Chatterji, a leader of H.R A. He even hawked newspapers, then worked as a journalist, etc. At the same time, he took active part in the activities of H.R.A. After the Kakori train dacoity and the extensive arrests on its heels, he again fled back to Lahore, Punjab, and began to work openly in the political field. In the very period when H.R.A. was in a grave crisis owing to the arrests of almost all its active cadres and leaders in connection with the Kakori conspiracy case, Bhagat Singh with the help of comrades Bhagavathi Charan Vohra, Ramchandra and others of Lahore, succeeded in estabilshing a militant organization of the youth devoted to the task of achieving independence and socialism.

This was the famous Naujawan Bharat Sabha of Punjab which at its height was more popular and powerful than the then Congress organization in Punjab. The weakness of the Punjab Congress was said to be due to the withdrawal of the 'Lion of Punjab' – Lala Lajpat Rai, from it and his joining the ranks of the Hindu communalists.[1] There are conflicting reports about the exact date of its establishment. Comrade Ramchandra who may be considered the founder-president of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, fortunately is still in our midst. He put the date of its establishment in the year 1924, and said that the influence of Irish, Italian, Russian and Turkish revolutions was behind its formation.[2] Manmathnath Gupta writes that it was formed in the year 1926.[3] Naujawan Bharat Sabha was conceived on the pattern of the Young Ireland organization and Bhagat Singh wanted to name it in English as the Young India Organization and was quite adamant over his proposal. But since a decision was already taken by all of them, unanimously, before the christening of the organization that all transactions of the organization were generally to be conducted in Hindustani, the proposal of Com. Ramchandra to change its name to Naujawan Bharat Sabha was ultimately accepted. It is noteworthy that this organization was formed by the graduates, students and teachers of the National College, Lahore. They took about 6 months to finalize the decision to establish the organization, frame its membership rules, and draft its constitution. At the time of its establishment, the main aim of the Sabha was stated to be the achievement of complete independence *by all possible means* (in contrast to the Congress aim of Dominion Status by peaceful and legitimate means). Its formation was hailed by many veteran revolutionaries including the renowned Bhai Paramanand of the Lahore conspiracy case (1915–16) fame.[4] Comrade Ramchandra elsewhere wrote that at first master Guru Dutt was elected President, Bhagat Singh – General Secretary, and Bhagwati Charan – Treasurer. But soon Master Guru Dutt was expelled from the organization and Comrade Ramchandra was elected President, in which capacity he continued till 1928.

The first provincial conference of Naujawan Bharat Sabha was held at Amritsar on 13 April, 1928 (the Jallianwallah

Bagh Anniversary day). It was attended by 100–200 youngmen from Punjab only, and no outside leaders were invited.[5] In that conference, Kedarnath Sehgal was elected President and a decision was taken to change the ideal of the organization. Henceforth, the establishment of a full-fledged, independent and sovereign Socialist Republic of Peasants and Workers by all posible means was to be the declared objective of the organization.[6] Manmathnath Gupta enumerates some other objectives of this Sabha: (a) to propagate patriotic ideas among the youth on the basis of nationalism; (b) to fully co-operate with such movements which have the ideal of the establishment a secular democratic republic of workers and peasants, and which may take place in social, economic and industrial spheres; and (c) to organize peasants and workers. He also informs us that the commitment of the youth to socialism and secularism was not just sentimental but was given effect to in practical works also. Meetings were organized in which the Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh youth were called forth to, and did, vehemently criticize their respective religious and superstitious practices. Communal dinings were arranged in which mutton, cut according to the *jhatka* and *halal* fashion, was served to Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs simultaneously.[7] The youth in the Sabha also tried to organize workers' unions and the president, Com. Ramchandra, was the first to initiate this process. In the above-mentioned conference, a Red Flag (plain red with no stars, stripes or symbols) was adopted as the flag of the organization and a song with these starting lines :

> *Lahandh chadhde Uttar Dakshin, Jhanda Lal Julamange,*
> *Fansi de takhte chadh ke geeth ise thay gamange*
>
> (We will wave our Red Flag high over the North and the South Standing on the gallows we will sing this very song).

was adopted as the official song of the organization. They also appealed to the people to seperate religion from politics and not to follow any communal or religious organization when it clashed with national interests.[8]

It was this Naujawan Bharat Sabha which was in the fore-front of all agitations in Punjab launched by the Congress,

and it also conducted independent agitations in support of revolutionaries. The famous Anti-Simon Commission procession under the leadership of Lala Lajpat Rai in Lahore, was to a great extent due to the efforts of this Sabha only. Manmathnath Gupta writes (approving Yashpal's version) that the volunteers of Naujawan Bharat Sabha not only stood as bodyguards of Lalaji but also were determined to prevent any order of retreat that might be given by that leader. A lathi charge was ordered on them in which the umbrella over Lalaji's head was broken and he was also hit. Lalaji called for an immediate retreat to the great chagrin of the youth volunteers. After that the procession dispersed and in a public meeting held shortly afterwards, Lalaji made a stirring speech in which he warned the British government that,

> Every lathi blow charged on his body would prove to be a nail in the coffin of the British imperialism. [9]

Lalaji took to bed immediately after that incident and with in a few weeks he died. It is not clear as to exactly what extent the lathi blows dealt on him on that fateful day were a cause for his eventual death. Jawaharlal Nehru had this much to say on this point.

> The physical injury to Lalaji had been serious enough, as he had been hit on the chest and he had long suffered from heart disease. Probably, in the case of a healthy young man, the injury would not have been great, but Lalaji was neither young nor healthy. What effect this physical injury had on his death a few weeks later it is hardly possible to say definitely, though his doctors were of opinion that it hastened the end. But I think there can be no doubt that the mental shock which accompanied the physical injury had a tremendous effect on Lalaji. He felt angry and bitter, not so much at the personal humiliation, as at the national humiliation, involved in the assault on him.

It was this sense of national humiliation that weighed on the mind of India, and when Lalaji's death

came soon after, inevitably it was connected with the assault, and sorrow itself gave pride of place to anger and indignation.[10]

That Lalaji's death was avenged and that it contributed to the amazing popularity of Bhagat Singh and H. S. R. A., we will deal with later *in extenso*. Here it would suffice to point out the great part played by the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in organizing the 'Simon Go back' procession and later in shaping the public opinion of anger and indignation at the death of Lalaji to the advantage of the revolutionaries. Later when Bhagat Singh and other comrades of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army were arrested and tried in the Lahore conspiracy case, it was the Naujawan Bharat Sabha which chiefly organized mass meetings in protest, conducted demonstrations raising the slogans of 'Inquilab Zindabad' to the skies, and collected funds for the defence of the revolutionaries. It also took a very prominent part in organizing hartals and protest demonstrations all over Punjab after the hanging of Bhagat Singh and two of his comrades, and also demonstrated in protest against Gandhiji's 'betrayal' of Bhagat Singh and others at Karachi in 1931. It also opposed the Gandhi-Irwin pact.

From 1931 onwards upto the banning of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in 1934, we find that organization riven by internal dissensions mainly between the communists owing allegiance to the C.P.I. (formed at Kanpur in 1925) and the Comintern, and the other socialists and revolutionaries (who also claimed themselves to be communists sometimes) who did not owe allegiance to the C.P.I. The communist version only states that Kedarnath Sehgal was elected the Chairman of Naujawan Bharat Sabha and had remained so upto the third week of February, 1929, when Sohan Singh Josh stepped into that post. The name of Com. Ramchandra, who was the President till 1928, is not even mentioned in this version.[11] Fortunately for us, Petrie confirms in essence what Com. Ramchandra told me about himself :

RAMCHANDRA, B A., ... educated at the National College, Lahore. ... Interested himself in the Labour

movement in the Punjab and assisted in the formation, in 1926, of the Young India Association or *Naujawan Bharat Sabha*, at Lahore, of which he became secretary and later president. The avowed object of this association was to prepare youngmen for political service, to popularize *Khaddar*, and to work for Hindu-Muslim Unity, but its proceedings soon showed it was impregnated with revolutionary ideas.[12]

But strangely, the later report by Williamson does not refer to Com. Ramchandra's name even once though it deals with the activities of Naujawan Bharat Sabha at many places. it further informs that by 1933, the *Sabha* '... was racked by communalism and consequent internal wrangling and financial stringency added still further to its troubles.' [13] By 1931, the Naujawan Bharat Sabha was said to be hardly distinguishable from its ally, Kirthi Kisan Sabha [14] It was also written that,

> Essentially an Upper India growth which has failed to take root in down-country places where attempts have been made to plant it, the *Sabha* is a communist organization in all but name. Its emblems are the hammer and the sickle, its preachings are but a slightly diluted form of Bolshevism and its connection with the openly communist *Kirti-Kisan Sabha* is no longer a matter for surmise. [15]

So it is obvious that much material has yet to be unearthed about this notable revolutionary mass association. We can only say that the only important activity of Naujawan Bharat Sabha after the hanging of Bhagat Singh and his comrades seems to be, apart from organizing hartals, etc., the organizing of the *Sabha* conference at Karachi simultaneously with the Congress session. Subhas Bose presided over this Naujawan Bharat Sabha conference which unequivocally opposed the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. It was an All India Naujawan Bharat Sabha session at which members of the Punjab Naujawan Bharat Sabha were said to have openly declared that they were against terrorism and that they believed in mass action on socialist lines. [16]

This is quite in conformity with what Com. Ramchandra told me. He said that he, the 'Founder-President' of the Sabha always differed with Com. Bhagat Singh, the founder-secretary regarding the use of terrorism. But that did not prevent them from whole-heartedly working together in mass activities and even helping each other's efforts. In the initial stages Naujawan Bharat Sabha was so full of H.S.R A. supporters that it could even be deemed a front organization of H. S R A. All the same, it was a historical fact that the Sabha as a body never followed terrorist methods, nor did Com. Ramchandra who was always working on the lines of mass organization and mass struggle.[17] It may be surmised that from 1931 onwards the *Sabha* came to be dominated by communists owing allegiance to the C.P.I. and Comintern, and from what Com. Ramchandra says it may be deemed that in 1931–32 at the Layalpur conference, the Sabha finally split [he says the commun sts who tried to expel him, while he was then in prison, were rebuffed and it was they who were ultimately expelled]. In 1934, Naujawan Bharat Sabha was banned along with the C.P.I., and other communist associations[18] It was never revived after that.

THE HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

We have seen that the Hindustan Republican Association received a heavy blow by the Kakori conspiracy case and only Chandra Sekhar Azad, a militant activist of that period, evaded arrest. Bhagat Singh, Sukh Dev and others, were but new recruits at that time and we have seen that Bhagat Singh had gone back to Lahore and was instrumental in founding the Naujawan Bharat Sabha. Intense efforts were, however, made soon to revive the Hindustan Republican Association and bring it to its former glory.

Phanindra Nath Ghosh of Bettiah, Bihar, was slowly trying to revive the organization in Bihar. His revolutionary career dated back to 1916 when he joined the Bengal Anushilan Party, and in 1926 he organized parties in Bihar. Jatindra (Jitendra ?) Nath Sanyal whose two brothers (Sachindra and

Bhupendra) had been convicted in the Kakori conspiracy case, was also there actively working for the revolutionary party. He was said to be supplying revolvers to Phanindra Nath Ghosh.[19] One Manindra from Benares who worked under and with rhe knowledge exclusive only to Rajendra Lahiri, is said to have been fired with the desire to avenge the death (by hanging) of his leader. He was said to have approached Jitendranath Sanyal who first did not think much of the emotional outburst of this youth. However, Manindra somehow managed to secure a revolver with only two cartridges and pumped both into the body of Jitendra Banerji, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, who was responsible for the hanging of Rajendra Lahiri. Jitendra Banerji, however, did not die but recovered after being unconscious for three days. Manindra was tried and convicted to 10 years R. I. This happened on 13 January, 1928, within one month after the hanging of Rajendra Lahiri.[20] The author of the report, *Terrorism in India : 1917–1936*, says that this youth was a member of a Bengali 'cell' at Benares which was in close touch with the New Violence party of Bengal.[21] Anyway, the point here is that even in U. P. and Bihar, the revolutionary organization was not totally dead and was not wanting in dedicated cadres.

From 1926, Sukhdev of Lyallpur, Punjab, was said to have been busy enlisting recruits, with Lahore as his head-quarters. He was helped by Yashpal, a master of the National School in that city, and enlisted Jai Gopal and Hansraj Vohra into the organization. This Hansraj vohra tried to create a local centre in Rawalpindi in early 1928 with the help of Jai Gopal and guidance of Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh.[22] Sukhdev was a capable organizer with certain idiocyncracies and contributed much to the development of the revolutionary organization in Punjab in the early stages. He, however, displayed great weakness later on some occasions, but all the same, courted martyrdom along with Bhagat Singh. Bhagawati Charan Vohra was another very prominent personality whose services to the revolutionary organization were hardly surpassed by any of his associates. He was unjustly calumniated as a police agent by Jayachandra Vidyalankar, a professor of National college and an 'old guard' of the

revolutionary organization, out of pure malice generating from very personal reasons. Fortunately, the skepticism of Sukh Dev saved the life of Bhagavati Charan who would have been surely shot dead by his own comrades if they had blindly believed Vidyalankar's canards. A thorough search of the premises of Bhagvati Charan's house having revealed nothing incriminating and the exemplary behaviour of Bhagvathi Charan having impressed them very much, Bhagat Singh and Sukh Dev indignantly dismissed the canards and wholeheartedly worked with Bhagwati Charan from that time.[23]

In the United Provinces, J. N. Sanyal, Lalit Kumar Mukherji and Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, along with Gaya Prasad and Shiva Varma, revived the organizational activities. Gaya Prasad established a Pharmacy at Ferozepur under the name of Dr. B. S. Nigam and the U.P. group was contacted by Sukhdev. In August, 1928, Sukh Dev rented a house in Amritsar, and this and the Pharmacy at Ferozepur became meeting places for the Party [24]

When contacts with old colleagues and new recruits were sufficiently wide-spread, it was decided to hold a conference of revolutinaries in Punjab, U.P., Bihar and Bengal.

> Subsequently, on the 8th and 9th September, meetings took place at Feroze Shah Tughlak's Fort at Delhi, as a result of which an amalgmation was made, with the exception of Bengal, as the party there was reported to be opposed to terrorism and violence. A central committee of seven was formed composed of Sukh Dev, Sheo Verma and P N. Ghosh, who were to be in charge of the Punjab, U.P., and Bihar respectively, Chandra Shekhar Azad (who was not present) head of the military department, Kundanlal Vidyarthi the proposed head of the central office located at Jhansi, and Bhagat Singh and B. K Sinha, who were to act as links. Terrorism was adopted as the policy of the party, and dacoity, murder and other acts of violence were included in the programme It is significant that the new name selected for the party was

> the 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Army'. The immediate programme included the rescue from jail of Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, and S. N. Sanyal, Kakori case convicts, and action against the Simon commission; it was further decided that bomb-makers from Bengal should be invited to instruct members of the party in their art. Other resolutions were passed for the murder of the approvers in the Kakori Case, and the commission of a dacoity in order to raise funds. Party names were also assigned.[25]

David Laushey quotes Balshastri Hardas who corroborates the version given in the Intelligence Report (quoted above) to the extent that the Bengal party was not represented as it was reported to be opposed to terrorism and violence. Balshastri wrote that the Anushilan Samiti was for a strict centralization of all activities and was also insistent that no fresh actions should be resorted to except collection of arms and tightening of the organisational discipline as well as a recruitment of fresh blood. They were to patiently wait and work for a national uprising at an appropriate time. This was quite unpalatable to the revolutionaries from Punjab, U.P. and Bihar, who were eager to resort to terrorist actions in addition to other kinds of organization. Hence, they decided to do without the participation of the Bengal party. After quoting this much from Balshastri, David Laushey also commented that though Balshastri seemed to be very much prejudiced against Bengalis, and especially those who became Marxists, nevertheless, his testimony did indicate the presence of some tension between the North Indian and the Bengali terrorists.[26] But the official History of Anushilan Samiti brands the above versions as instances of distorted history and reserves the same epithet for Yashpal's version in *Singhavalokan* Their contention is that the H.S.R.A. was a continuation of H.R.A. which again was the Northern Indian unit of the Anushilan Samiti. The Anushilan Samiti allowed sufficient regional and provincial autonomy to its units. The H.S.R.A. all the time maintained close contacts with senior leaders of the Samiti in Bengal. For a decision about the change of the name of the Northern Indian unit,

attendance of a representative from Bengal was not called for.[27]

We can only repeat what we have already commented on the relations between H R. A. and the Anushilan, and with greater vehemence. If H R. A. was a recalcitrant child, H. S. R. A. can only be characterized as a totally independent grand-child of the Anushilan. If this satisfies the ego of the Anushilan Samiti, I have no objection in conceding this much. But I have to remark that even the Anushilan Samiti was then far from being a monolithic body, it was facing a lot of discontent in its ranks and some middle-rank leaders had deserted it to form communist groups. Moreover, H. S. R. A. through Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt execised great influence over the younger and more militant cadres of both Anushilan and Juganthar parties who met together to form the so called 'revolt group' in 1928–29. The indignation exhibited in the official history of the Anushilan seems to be quite meaningless since after all it is an established fact (I think it is even admitted by Anushilanites), that what all activities were committed by H. S. R. A. were done quite independently without any sort of reference to the Anushilan Samiti of Bengal. If you just derive pleasure in tracing genealogies, then even Juganthar was but an off shoot of Anushilan. Did that in any way prevent it from becoming a premier rival organization of the Anushilan Samiti in Bengal ? In my view H S R. A. (and even H. R. A. to an extent) stands in the same position to Anushilan as Juganthar stands in relation to Anushilan. It is curious to note that the keenly perceptive David Petrie comments thus upon Jogesh Chatterji whom even the official historians of Anushilan Samiti try to magnify out of proportion and place on a higher pedestal than the illustrious Sachindra Sanyal :

> Jogesh Chatterji began his revolutionary career as a member of Anushilan .. but his subsequent connection with the Hindustan Republican Association, with its numerous Jugantar links, seems to indicate his membership of the latter party, at the time when his Bolshevik tendencies became evident.[28]

If Jogesh Chatterji himself later stuck firmly to the Anushilan banner, that does in no way mean that he was so steadfast in faith or allegiance all through his revolutionary career. I think any further comments on this point are superfluous.

The great importance of the Feroze Shah Kotla Fort meeting lies elsewhere in the definite commitment of the revolutionaries to the building up of a socialist society (in independent India). Accordingly, the word 'Socialist' was inserted into the name of the organization and only two members present (one of them was Phanindranath Ghosh) opposed this move. Even they were not openly opposed to socialism as such but were only arguing that the name given by veteran revolutionaries like Sachindranath Sanyal should not be tampered with. However, the overwhelming majority opted for the change.[29] Yashpal had given an explanation in *Singhavolokan* that it was not as if they had fully understood the theory of Scientific Socialism at that time, but within the limitations of their understanding they were moving in that direction. Though they agreed that the regime of the proletariat had to be established, they did not really understand the real probelms and difficulties facing the peasants and workers of India, nor did they find out any scientific way for their liberation. They could not fully understand that the liberation of the working class could only be a work of the working class itself and it (liberation of the working class) was not possible by the intervention of any outside force or any superhuman agency. They were ready to lay down their lives for the 'dumb millions' but 'they were isolated from the people as Gandhi too was' (?) since he wanted the uplift of the people by soul-force and by the force of example of certain devoted followers.[30] It is also remarkable that the words communism or marxism appear nowhere in the manifesto of H. S. R. A. This may be a conscious or unconscious demonstration of the clear-cut demarcation of those revolutionaries from the then Communist Party of India. Manmathnath Gupta finds fault with the way Yashpal explained their ideological position at that time. He points out that even the C. P. I. at that time was not bereft of defects and drawbacks He further remarks (perhaps rather anachronously) that they (communists) have cut down

the wings of the Great Eagle of Socialism and made it into a sort of Parliamentary turtle! He strongly criticises Yashpal's statement that what sympathy Azad had towards the toiling people was largely sentimental and points out that Azad had himself been a labourer and he did not need to declass himself as Bhagat Singh (needed). Hence Socialism was as natural to him as flying was to a bird. He also quotes, a bit out of context, from Lenin who said we could not conceive of a revolution without firing squads.[31] Though Manmathnath Gupta was right in pointing out the (more pronounced) defects of the then communists, it is also incorrect on his part to glorify the then consciousness of revolutionaries uncritically. It is clear as noon-day that in spite of all his conservatism and non-violence, Gandhi was closer to the masses (and he could move them in millions) than these revolutionaries. The difference was not in violence or non-violence, but in the inability of the revolutionaries to understand (feel the pulse of) the people and primarily engage in mass work. Significantly, Manamathnath Gupta himself told me that it was noteworthy that Sachindra Sanyal proudly told him that in the original manifesto of H. R A., nothing else was changed except for the addition of the word 'Socialist'.[32]

The immediate action-programme chalked out in that Feroze Shah Kotla Conference included the rescue of Jogesh Chatterji and S. N. Sanyal, and throwing bombs on the members of the Simon Commission. The former task could not be carried out by Azad, Bhagat Singh and others, in view of some practical difficulties and the latter was abandoned due to an accident and probably also due to the enormous expenses involved. Instead, throwing bombs into the Assembly Hall was planned. In early 1929, Jatindrnath Das, an expert in bomb-making, was brought to Agra and Lahore to teach the art of bomb-making to his fellow-revolutionaries.

By October, 1928, the Anti-Simon Commission agitation picked up momentum and on 30 October, 1928, Lala Lajpat Rai was beaten while leading a protest demonstration and within a few weeks, to be exact on 17 November, 1928, Lalaji breathed his last, obviously under the impact of the physical and phychological injuries following this lathi charge.

As Nehru pointed out, it was taken to be an instance of national humiliation, and Basanti Devi, the widow of Deshbandhu C. R. Das, gave a public statement that some youngman of the country would avenge the death of this great leader even before his embers had fully cooled. And it happened so.[33] On 17 December, 1928, i e., exactly a month after Lalaji's death, Mr. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police, was shot dead by Rajguru and Bhagat Singh, when he was coming out of the Police Head Quarters on his motor-cycle. Chanan Singh, a head constable who obstinately pursued the revolutionaries who were running away, was shot dead by Chandra Sekhar Azad with his mauser pistol while the traffic sub-inspector Fern and another constable wisely stopped pursuing and this saved their own lives.

It is to be noted that Azad, Bhagat Singh and his comrades, actually wanted to kill the Superintendent of Police, Mr. Scot, and mistook Saunders coming on the motor-cycle for him (or rather Jaigopal who was to give the signal for others, mistook him to be Scot and gave the signal). But then it was too late for them to silently withdraw. Even Mr. Saunders was said to be present on that fateful day of lathi-charge on Lalaji and actually it did not matter much whether Scott was killed or Saunders was, as far as the revolutionaries were concerned. Hence, they proceeded with the action. Secondly it is not true that this murder was just an action of revenge of a respectful student (Bhagat Singh) on the death of his teacher and leader. The revolutionaries were indeed avenging a national humiliation and not just the death of Lalaji, As a matter of fact, the relations between Lala Lajpat Rai and Bhagat Singh were quite strained in those days and Lalaji was so annoyed with Bhagat Singh that he had specially issued instructions to his society librarian to stop supplying books to him.[34] It was also probable that Lala Lajpat Rai who was turning more towards Hindu religiosity in those days, intensely disliked any inclinations to communism or socialism displayed by his ex-students Bhagat Singh and others. And over and above that, Bhagat Singh was a convinced atheist. Also, Lalaji was said to have lost all faith in secret organizations and violent revolution and considered terrorism not only futile but sinful.[35]

Within two or three days red posters appeared at many places on walls of Lahore city announcing thus.

> The murder of a leader respected by millions of people ... ... was an insult to the nation It was the bounden duty of young men of India to efface it.
>
> *We regret to have had to kill a person* but he was part and parcel of that inhuman and unjust order which has to be destroyed. ... *Shedding of human blood grieves us* but bloodshed at the altar of revolution is unavoidable Our objective is to work for a revolution which could end exploitation of man by man.[36]

These posters not only confirm that the revolutionaries were avenging a national humiliation but also bring out the humanism burning in their hearts which made them grieve over the shedding of human blood. So, we can see that H S.R.A. revolutionaries were terrorists with a difference and quite different from their Bengal counterparts of 1930–34, who tried to kill Europeans (even women and children) at all costs

After the Saunders' murder, Bhagat Singh and Rajguru escaped to Calcutta by a first class journey in train along with Durga Bhabi, wife of the respected comrade Bhagwati Charan Vohra, and her infant son. Bhagat Singh shaved off his beard, cut his hair and made himself up like a European-mannered youngman, Rajguru was in the guise of his servant, and Durga Bhabi and her son were passed off as the *biwi* and *baccha* of the Babu Sahib. It was quite a thrilling venture and even Bhagwati Charan was quite surprised at, and very much admired the fortitude and courage displayed by, Durga Bhabi when he received them at the Delhi Railway Station. Chandrasekhar Azad sneaked out of Lahore in the guise of a Sadhu along with a group of Sadhus.

The next important action of H.S R.A. and the more significant one in terms of nation-wide propaganda, was the throwing of bombs into the Central Legislative Assembly by Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt on 8 April, 1929. The years 1927–28 and the early months of 1929, were a tumultous

period in the history of the working class movement in India. There were innumerable strikes all over the country, especially in Bombay and Calcutta. The famous Girni Kamgar Union of Bombay under the leadership of the communists conducted a glorious and protracted strike for 6 months commencing from 26 April, 1928. The famous Bengal-Nagpur Railway workers strike at Kharagpur, the East India Railway workers strike at at Liluah, Bengal, the strike on South India Railway, the strike on the G.I.P. Railway as well as the general strikes in October, 1928, and April, 1929, in Bombay, were unprecedented in the annals of the working class struggles in India. Most of these strikes owed their origin or continuance to communists and at times to socialists of various denominations. Sukomal Sen says that the sweep and intensity of the country-wide working class struggles which began in early 1927 and climaxed by 1928–29, had no parallel in the earlier history of Indian Labour.[37] This phenomenal development could not but have a profound impact on the governmental authorities as well as on the national revolutionaries who for the first time witnessed the power and glory of organized working-class struggles. The British government was more concerned with the spread of Bolshevik ideas among the workers and to their horror they found that English communists like Philip Spratt and Bradley came to India to intensely organize the working classes and succeeded in their efforts significantly. Since the democratic set-up in England would not permit any cancellation or withholding of passports, visas etc., to these English communists in their homeland, the British Indian government wanted to make use of its autocratic powers to push through a Public Safety Bill in the Central Legislative Assembly which authorized the Government to deport any suspected foreigner without trial! Along with it they wanted to get passed a Trade Disputes Bill making it impossible for the working class to resort (legally) to any indefinite general strike in pursuance of their demands. Both these bills, especially the former one, were very much resented by the nationalist circles and the non-official members of the Central Legislative Assembly belonging to nationalist parties. Meanwhile on March 20, 1929, the British Government in India launched the famous Meerut conspiracy case

arresting prominent congressmen, labour leaders of youth leagues (8 A.I.C.C. members were among the arrested), branding them (rightly or wrongly) as communists. The arrests were made under section 121 A of the I.P.C. and the charge was one of conspiracy to deprive the King of the Sovereignty of British India. The venue of the trial was arranged in Meerut expressly to deny the facility of trial by jury to the accused.[38] These large scale arrests created a great stir and discontent among the people of India, and they were clearly intended to smother the raging working class movements by depriving them of their tried and tested leaders. It is in this convulsive background that the famous Assembly bomb case occurred.

The idea to throw bombs in the Assembly seems to have had been mooted by Bhagat Singh only. He was very much impressed by the French anarchist martyr, Valliant, who threw a bomb in the French Assembly and courted death on the gallows. Bhagat Singh even seems to have had written an article on Valliant which was published in the magazine, *Kirthi*.[39] But, though it was Bhagat Singh who mooted the proposal, in the first instance, he was not selected to perform that action. The party then decided that—

> Bhagat Singh should go to Russia and Sukhdev and Batukeshwar Dutt should carry out the programme of throwing bombs in the Central Assembly. But there was a sharp difference of opinion between Bhagat Singh and Sukhdev. Sukhdev even went to the extent of accusing Bhagat Singh of moral turpitude to drive home his point . According to Dr Mahore, the object of the action being only ideological propaganda it was Sukhdev's idea to send the best ideologue Bhagat Singh himself wanted to do it, but the central committee wanted to spare him .. ... When he [Sukhdev] ... heard of this decision [to spare Bhagat Singh], he was furious ... he quoted the judgment of the Lahore High Court about Bhai Paramanand in which .. the judges said although Bhai Paramanand was the brain and source of the conspiracy, he was personally a coward and he spurred his friends to action while keeping

his own skin intact. He said : "Bhagat Singh, the same would be written of you. "

According to Mahore, Sukhdev forced Bhagat Singh to convene another meeting of the Central Council to revise its decision. The Council met, and the previous decision was changed. Sukhdev is supposed to have wept bitterly after the decision. ... But ... Sukhdevraj in his memoirs .. (shows) Sukhdev as jealous of Bhagat Singh's achievements and his influence in the party. In order to drive his point home he accused him of being in love with Durga Bhabi knowing full well that this was completely wrong. I think Mahore was also aware of this .. But Mahore does not take his readers into confidence. He simply says, "Bhagat Singh said, 'My dear fellow, you are insulting me,' at this Sukhdev said very sternly, 'I am doing my duty towards my friend', .. At last Bhagat Singh left the place saying "Please never talk to me."

Thus it can be seen that very personal reasons made Bhagat Singh take a political decision. Life is so strange. I am not surprised that Bhagat Singh was impelled by the calumny of Sukhdev.

The ultimate decision was that Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt should throw bombs and leaflets in the Central Assembly and Chandrasekhar Azad and others were to escort them back. But Bhagat Singh did not approve of the latter part of the decision. He argued that his supreme sacrifice was called for to awaken the masses.[40]

I am also not surprised about the very personal turn in these epochal developments. This is also an instance of the role accidents play in history. But I very much bemoan the impulsiveness and even stupidity of Bhagat Singh who was moved by the slanders of his 'friend' to embark on this unwise course. Perhaps he did not know that the British law rarely, if ever, sentenced anybody to death except on the charge of high treason or culpable homicide amounting to murder, and

there was no chance for him to court martyrdom by throwing bombs in the Assembly unlike his French idol. Ironically, it was not on account of this bomb-throwing but on account of the murder of Saunders (regarding which he was all along evading arrest) that he was hanged and probably even the Lahore conspiracy case owed its origin to the 'weakness' (to say the least) of Sukhdev. But then all great personalities are limited by their historical conditions, and in the atmosphere in which he grew up and worked, perhaps it was impossible for Bhagat Singh to transcend the sentimental limitations.

The Trade Disputes Bill was passed on the 8 April, 1929, in the Central Legislative Assembly by 56 votes to 38 (obviously even the supporters of the bourgeoisie among the nationalist parties voted for this bill since they naturally could not tolerate the growing might of the working class), and when

> President Patel got up to give his ruling on the Public Safety Bill, two bombs fell from the gallery near the seat of Sir George Schuster. The House dispersed at once in panic, Sir John Simon was in the President's gallery when the bombs fell, Sir George Schuster, Sir Bomanji Dalal, Messrs. Raghavendra Rao and Shanker Rao were injured, Sir Bomanji Dalal seriously. "Three government benches were entirely torn to pieces. Mr. S. N. Roy, deputy secretary, Indian committee, who was sitting in the officers' gallery, was also hit and his hands bled profusely. A red pamphlet headed 'Hindustan Socialist Republican Army notice' signed by 'Balraj, commander-in-chief', was also thrown along with the bombs. Two men were arrested, Batukeswara Dutt from Bengal, domiciled in Cawnpore, and Bhagat Singh, from the Punjab." [41]

Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt made a statement in the court explaining their motives in throwing the bombs into the Assembly hall. In that classic statement they made it clear that their struggle was not directed against individuals but against an institution which trampled over the rights of the toiling masses. They were especially sore at the attempts of

the British Indian Government to get approved the Trades Disputes bill to crush the working class struggles. They declared themselves to be pioneers of a new movement inspired by the ideals which guided Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kamal Pasha and Riza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi, and Lafayette and Lenin. They forcefully pleaded that they never intended to harm the lives of any Individuals by throwing the bombs into the Assembly hall but only wanted to emphatically register their protest against the atrocious misrule of the British imperialists. They declared that they were giving a timely warning which if heeded could prevent loss of life and general suffering. As for themselves, they were least concerned about their fate and asserted that no amount of repression or incarceration could check the onward march of the revolution.[42]

But that statement, quite laudable though it is otherwise, does not yet explain (if what Yashpal wrote is true) why Sardar Bhagat Singh fired two shots from his revolver at Sir John Schuster, who escaped since in the meantime he had taken cover under his desk.[43] If what Yashpal wrote is true, we should sadly recognize that this otherwise excellent statement was marred by the telling of an untruth, perhaps out of legalistic considerations.

The murder of Saunders to avenge the death of the respected Lalaji and this daring bomb-throwing in the Central Legislative Assembly at once catapulted Bhagat Singh (and to an extent his organisation also) to nation-wide popularity. The slogans 'Long Live Revolution' (*Inquilab Zindabad*) and 'Down with Imperialism' were soon to become the most popular among the nationalist slogans. Meanwhile, both Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt were sentenced to transportation for life at the trial held in Delhi on 12 June, 1929.

Meanwhile on April 15, Sukhdev, Jaigopal and Kishorilal were arrested in a premises in Lahore which was termed by the police as the Lahore bomb factory Sukhdev seems to have had revealed much to the police, and others followed his trail and from the facts disclosed by these accused, the whole history of the revolutionary organization came to light.'[44]

Widespread arrests and searches were effected in Lahore, Kanpur, and other principal places, following upon the information elicited from these three accused In all, 32 accused were charged with conspiracy to overthrow the Government of India by waging war against the King-Emperor, and to establish a Federated Republican Government in its stead. Of the 32 accused, 7 turned approvers, 9 were absconding and the remaining 16 were actually tried. They were charged under sections 121, 122, and 123 of the Indian Penal Code upon the complaint of Mr. George Trevor Hamilton Hardinge, Senior Superintendent of Police, Lahore, who was the main complainant in the case. The embezzlement of Rs. 3190/– from a sub-Post Office by Kailashpati (an absconder in the case who later became an approver in the Delhi Conspiracy case) ; an attempted dacoity at the Punjab National Bank, Lahore; the Killing of Saunders; the throwing of bombs into the Assembly; a dacoity with murder at Maulnia, and the manufacturing of bombs at various secret places (called factories in the police jargon) at Lahore, Saharanpore, Calcutta, and Agra – all these offences were grouped together and were averred to have been committed in furtherance of a single conspiracy of the Hindustan Republican Association and its armed wing, the Indian Republican Army. The intended attempt (which did not materialize) to blow up the train carrying the members of the Simon Commission and the plans (which also did not materialize) to rescue Jogesh Chatterji and Sachindranath Sanyal were also cited in the charge-sheet.[43]

Of the 9 absconders, Bijay Kumar Sinha and Rajguru (Raghunath) were arrested within a short time and were tried along with the others. Bhagvati Charan and Azad courted glorious martyrdom within two years of the launching of the case. Kailashpati of Jhansi was arrested towards the end of 1930 and turned approver in another important case – the Delhi conspiracy case, against the revolutionaries. Yashpal could only be arrested in 1932, but was tried and convicted for other cases.

In the prosecution version, as well as in the version given by Manmathnath Gupta, it is stated that consequent upon the

bomb explosion at Roshani Gate, Lahore, during the Dusserah festival (i.e., on October 23, 1928), two students were arrested and through them it was learnt that Bhagat Singh was involved in the murder of Saunders and Bhagvati Charan was a leading revolutionary. The police was keeping a strong eye of vigilance and when they compared the bomb-shells used in the Assembly bomb case with certain shells ordered to be manufactured in a local workshop at Lahore, they struck at the 'right thing' and were said to have arrested Sukhdev and others in their den. But the bomb explosion seems to be the work of some Muslim fanatics. One 'Abdul Ghani was hanged for the crime, but no connection with the main revolutionary party was shown.'[46] It is quite possible that the 'bomb factory' was accidentally discovered (a version that one of the workers in the workshop got doubts about the purpose of this shell-making and voluntarily informed the police was also there), but it seems the main culpability for extensive revelation only rests on Sukhdev and his comrades, primarily on Sukhdev. That he later courted martyrdom cannot absolve him from this 'display of weakness', to say the least.

Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt wonderfully used the court as a platform for revolutionary propaganda. During the trial of the Assembly bomb case at Delhi, they made clear that the revolution they were aiming at was meant to ultimately establish an order of society in which the sovereignty of the proletariat was recognized, and to lead to the emergence of a world federation which would redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery of imperialist wars. They ended their statement with these unforegettable lines:

> Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imprescriptible birth-right of all. The labourer is the real sustainer of society The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of workers. For these ideals and for this faith we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content. We await the advent of revolution. Long live revolution.[47]

But in the proceedings of the main Lahore conspiracy case, it seems they had no occassion to sufficiently make use of the court as a platform for revolutionary propaganda The main reason for this apart from the very significant fact that the trial was held inside the Lahore Central Jail compound and was naturally not that much 'open', seems to be the protracted and repeated hunger strikes they undertook in the Jail.

HUNGER-STRIKES IN JAILS

Hunger-strikes by political prisoners in jails was an age-old method, perhaps the only effective method in case of isolated individual prisoners to fight against the arbitrariness and atrocities of the jail officials and the government. Even that illustrious Chitpavan Brahmin revolutionary, Vasudev Balwant Phadke, was reported to have resorted to many hunger strikes in the Aden jail and the weakness and ill-health consequent upon such fasts was said to have consumed his life within a few years. The 1857 mutineers and the Wahabi-Farzi rebels sent to the Andamans, did also occasionally resort to this method. But the prolonged hunger-strikes of the first Lahore conspiracy case prisoners in 1929, could be said to have taken the struggles by fasting to an entirely new and higher pedestal. It was as a result of those heroic hunger strikes and the glorious martyrdom of comrade Jatindranath Das that the classification of all priscners in to A, B, and C classes, and the removal of any sort of racial discrimination in Jails, obtain today in the Indian Jails.

Before Bhagat Singh, Jatindas and his comrades, the Kakori case prisoners also resorted to a prolonged hunger strike of 16 days. At that time they were still undertrials and they had been given special treatment on medical grounds and were induced to call off the strike. Once they were convicted, they lost all the facilities. They were seperated into groups of two or three and were scattered in many jails, thus depriving them of the possibility to resort to any organized and united struggle. [48] They could not achieve their main demand that

they be treated in a special way on the basis of classification as political prisoners. Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt started their hunger-strike while still in Delhi jail, demanding special treatment as political prisoners. Of the two, only Bhagat Singh was implicated in the Lahore conspiracy case (it seems Batukeswar Dutt's name was first included but later eliminated by the police who were satisfied with the transportation for life awarded to him), and when they were brought to Lahore on 10 July, their fast was already into the fourth week. On 13 July, Jaidev Kapur alone went to the court and informed those present that as the fast of Bhagat Singh had entered into the fifth week, all the accused in the Lahore conspiracy case also had decided to start an indefinite hunger-strike. Their demands were: classification of revolutionaries as political prisoners; better food and clothing; supply of books, newspapers and writing materials; immunity from hard labour and humiliating work; supply of oil, soap, etc., and the discontinuance of forcible feeding. The prolonged fast created great commotion among the public, and huge demonstrations were held all over India.[49] Right from 14 July, Naujawan Bharat Sabha and the Congress, had been organizing public meetings, protest demonstrations, etc., in support of the political prisoners, and were also collecting funds for the defence of these prisoners. Women in large numbers took part in these processions and on the first day itself Rs. 10,000/– was collected for the defence fund Dr. Mohammed Alam, the leader of the Punjab Nationalist party in the Punjab Legislative Council, sent a telegram to Ramsay Macdonald, the then British Labour Prime Minister, asking him to intervene in favour of the fasting prisoners and forestall the occurrence of any martyrdom on the lines of the martyrdom of the Irish Freedom fighter Terence Mac' Sweney, the Lord Mayor of Cork Town, who courted death after 76 days of hunger-strike (it is quite significant to note that after Jatindas' death, a condolence telegram which ran thus:

> Family of Terence Mac' Sweney have heard with grief and pride of the death of Jatin Das. Freedom will come.

was sent, from Ireland, by the family of Terence Mac' Sweney);

Public meetings were taking place, processions held, petitions appealing to the wisdom of the British Labour Party were being sent, and legal battles were being waged in courts on this issue all at a time.[50] But the struggle dragged on. Though Bhagat Singh and Dutt were on hunger-strike since 4 weeks before the starting of hunger strike by the other Lahore conspiracy case prisoners, the condition of Jatindas and Jitendra Sanyal deteriorated quite rapidly. On 16 August, 1929, the Government, appointed a Jail Inquiry Committee which met the fasting Lahore prisoners in the first week of September, 1929, and recommended the unconditional release of Jatindas and also assured the fasting prisoners of a favourable solution to their demands. Upon this Bhagat Singh and others broke their fast, but Jatindas refused to do so. The Government did not agree to release Jatindas unconditionally but ordered his release on parole on production of a nominal surety and even (of course clandestinely) arranged one surety. But Jatindas refused release on parole.[51] His condition now deteriorated beyond any possibility of survival. He courted death inch by inch, hour by hour. He breathed his last on 13 September, 1929. His dead body was delivered at the jail gate to Dr. Gopichand Bhargav and Kiran Das (the brother of Jatindas) at 5–30 p.m., and among the people lifting the bier were Dr. Mohammed Alam, Dr. Kichlew, Sardar Sardul Singh Kavishwar, Sardar Kishen Singh and other prominent personalities. Some 25,000 people had collected near the jail and a mammoth procession was taken out upto the Railway Station. The slogans of *'Inquilab Zindabad'* rent the skies of Lahore (and it has since attained the status of a national slogan). All through the roads, flowers and bouquets were thrown on the bier. At 9 p.m., a big public meeting was held at Delhi Darwaja in which Dr. Alam and Dr. Gopichand Bhargav gave intensely emotional speeches and announced that they would resign their Council membership in protest. In the morning of the next day, i.e., 14 September, 1929, the body of Jatindas was placed in a special compartment in the train to Calcutta. Durga Bhabi and Pramila, Batukeswar Dutt's widowed sister, accompanied the dead body upto Calcutta. Some youths of Naujawan Bharat Sabha were also there. At every station

thousands of people turned up to pay obeisance to this great martyr. The whole of India observed a *hartal* and everywhere processions and public meetings were held on 14 September. Congress flags were ordered to fly at half-mast at all places. At Kanpur Railway station, Jawaharlal Nehru, Purushottam Das Tandon and thousands of people, paid their respects to this martyr. At Allahabad, Prathibha Sanyal, wife of Sachindra Sanyal, and Kumari Indira Nehru (our late Premier Indira Gandhi), and thousands of others paid their respects At last, when the train reached Calcutta (Howrah Railway station), Sjt J. M. Sengupta, Dr. Syamprasad Mukherji, etc., were leading a sea of humanity which turned up at the Railway station. In a huge procession the body was taken to *Kewada Tola* cremation grounds and the dead body of Jatindas was finally consigned to flames on a pyre of *chandan* wood. There was a collection of 6,00,000 persons on that day which shattered all records upto that time.[52]

We agree with Manmathnath Gupta that it was quite strange on the part of Mahatma Gandhi to have kept completely silent about the fast althrough those 64 days and also not to have uttered a single word till about a month after Das' martyrdom Further, he tried to paint a picture of Jatindas being, by nature, unfit for the purposes of violent activities. Actually, it was not so. Jatindas participated in some daring actions and also was an expert in bomb-making. It was he who taught the art to the other H.S.R.A. revolutionaries Manmathnath Gupta rightly points out that all people who laid down their lives in hunger-strikes in jails right from the period of the first world war to 1934, were all revolutionaries; and not a single disciple of Mahatma Gandhi died fasting on any issue.[53] However, it should be noted that the Congress paid glowing tributes to the martyrs Jatindas and Rev. Wyzia (who died in a Burmese jail after fasting for six months).

Here I suppose it would net be out of context to deal with the hunger-strikes by other revolutionaries also. First of all, to end the story of the hunger-strikes by the Lahore conspiracy case prisoners, we should note that even after the martyrdom of Jatindas, matters were not resolved and Bhagat

Singh and other comrades had to resort to another prolonged fast whereafter the Government issued a declaration classifying all prisoners into A, B, and C classes, and eliminating all racial discrimination in treatment of prisoners, though it did not classify political prisoners as a seperate entity. Satisfied with this, the Lahore conspiracy case prisoners stopped their hunger-strike, but the Kakori convicts persisted in the fasts till all of them were declared to be 'B' class prisoners. Ironically, the Lahore conspiracy case prisoners never received any special facilities. After the hanging of Bhagat Singh and other comrades, the rest of the convicts were scattered in various jails and some transported to the Andamans; and were never placed in a higher class.

The prisoners transported to the Andamans had to bear untold hardships and miseries. Nani Gopal and other prisoners of the Cellular jail in the Andamans resorted to hunger-strike and then on the advice of V. D. Savarkar, to a work-strike, and elicited certain concessions from the jail authorities (1913). Pandit Ram Rakha, convicted in the Burma conspiracy case, was a Hindustani Brahman and protested against the removal of his sacred thread by resorting to hunger-strike. He starved himself for three months till he died, but yet his sacred thread was not restored to him (1916–20).[54] But the first historic hunger-strike—a veritable general strike of the Andamans' prisoners, was launched on 12 May, 1933, and after 46 days it was called off on 26 June, 1933, when their demands were conceded. But the saddest part of the story was that Mahavir Singh, a convict of Lahore conspiracy case and a comrade of Bhagat Singh, died on the very first day of forced feeding (17 May). Mohit Mitra, a Bengali convict under Arms act and due to be released in 1934, also died as a result of forced feeding on 28 May, and another Bengali, Mohan Kishore, also died in the same manner.[55] The second historic hunger-strike of the Andamans prisoners started on 24 July, 1937, with the main demand for immediate repatriation of the Andamans' prisoners to the main-land jails along with other 'national' demands like declaration of a general amnesty to all detenus. The strike was called off after 45 days and the Government promised to repatriate the political prisoners. Fortunately, this time there

were no deaths among the hunger-strikers, mainly due to the efficient care of Captain Chaudhari, tha senior Medical officer. The first batch was sent back to India in September, 1937. When the last batch left on 18 January, 1938, the Andaman jails were denuded of political prisoners after a period of nearly eighty years.[56] In South India, the 63 days' hunger-strike in 1934, by Kanuri Ramananda Choudhary, a B-class Convict in the Madras Conspiracy Case seems to be worth mentioning here.

MARTYRDOM OF BHAGWATI CHARAN AND AZAD, AND HANGING OF BHAGAT SINGH, RAJGURU, AND SUKHDEV

The Lahore conspiracy case trial had to be adjourned many times due to the absence of the accused in the court due to their prolonged hunger-strikes. When the accused were fortunately present, it was marred by instances of police brutality and judicial callousness and connivance. The accused used to shout the slogans of 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Down with Imperialism' inside the court hall and were cheered by hundreds of the audience who loudly responded. The youth of Naujawan Bharat Sabha were in the forefront shouting slogans and courting the bestial lathi-charges by the police. Even the accused were not spared. Not only were they brought in handicuffs into the court hall but were also severely beaten by the police in the presence of the Magistrate. In the jail, they were not granted interviews with friends and in the case of Bhagat Singh (who was not represented in the court by any counsel) even consultations with an advocate were not allowed. Moreover, newspapers were not supplied to them in abundance. On these grounds they had boycotted the court.[57]

The enquiry in the Lahore conspiracy case commenced before a special Magistrate on 11 July, 1929, and it was considered necessary by the prosecution to produce about 600 witnesses. But due to the historic hunger-strike in which Jatindas Gupta died, the case had to be adjourned till 24 September. It was then resumed, but due to the 'defiant and dis-

orderly conduct by some of the accused, or demonstrations by members of the public, there were numerous interruptions. Again on February 4, most of the accused went on hunger-strike and hence the case had to be adjourned till 8 March. During the course of over nine months the committing Magistrate could examine about 230 witnesses only and there was the possibility of further 'undue' delay. In view of this, Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, issued the Lahore conspiracy case Ordinance by which the enquiry before the Magistrate ceased and the accused were deemed to have been committed to Sessions, and the case would be heard by a special tribunal of three judges to be appointed by the chief justice of Lahore. The Tribunal was vested with powers to take such measures as it might think necessary to secure orderly conduct of the trial and even with powers to dispense with the attendance of any accused who voluntarily obstructed the court proceedings or resisted his production before the court, and to proceed with the trial in his absence. The proceedings of the tribunal were to be final with no further chance to appeal This ordinance was gazetted on 1 May, 1930.[58]

Meanwhile, Chandra Sekhar Azad, Bhagwati Charan, Yashpal and other comrades, who were absconding, were making feverish preparations to rescue Bhagat Singh and other comrades as well as to develop the extent and strength of the revolutionary organization. The most sensational act they committed was the blowing up of the Viceroy's train near Delhi on 23 December, 1929. Fortunately for Lord Irwin and his Lady, only the dining compartment was blown up, the train did not derail and the Viceroy escaped with minor injuries. That day at about 10 a m., the Viceroy was to meet Gandhiji and his associates to discuss the granting of Dominion status to India. It may be recalled that during the Calcutta session of the Congress in December, 1928, a resolution was accepted to limit the Congress demand to attainment of Dominion status but also a dead-line was set for the declaration of the same by the British goverment within one year. In the absence of any such declaration on or before 31 December, 1929, the Congress was free and determined, to proclaim complete in-

dependence as its immediate goal. Lord Irwin in his capacity as Viceroy had made a conciliatory declaration on 31 October, 1929, which ran thus:

> I am authorized on behalf of His Majesty's Government to state clearly that, in their judgment, it is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion status.[59]

The Congress leaders were very much expectant following this declaration and wanted to elicit definite assurance about, if not immediate declaration of, granting dominion status to India. But their meeting with the Viceroy on 23 December, 1929, was a failure and the country proceeded towards the inevitable declaration of complete independence as the immediate goal of the Indian National Congress in the Lahore Congress Session at the midnight of 31 December, 1929, and shortly afterwards plunged into the vortex of a great popular movement against the British rule.

The exact extent to which the attempt on the Viceroy's life by the revolutionaries damaged the prospects of a compromise between the Congress and the British government, is still a mystery. But Mahatma Gandhi was very much angered by this attack of the revolutionaries, and on his insistence a resolution was passed in the Lahore Congress, congratulating Lord and Lady Irwin on their providential escape. Dr. B. Pattabi Sitharamaiah writes :

> It was not without some difficulty that the resolution on the bomb outrage was passed. The resolution was stoutly opposed by a certain section of the delegates and it was passed by a narrow majority.[60]

Gandhiji also wrote an article, 'Cult of the Bomb', in his *Young India*, denouncing the violent activities of revolutionaries as harmful to national interests and as counterproductive. To this the revolutionaries replied with the famous manifesto "The Philosophy of the Bomb" which was written by Bhagwati Charan Vohra after a thorough discussion with, and concu-

rrence of, Chandrasekhar Azad. The revolut'onaries reiterated their firm conviction that India can be liberated through armed revolution only and declared that they would ask for no mercy and would give no quarter. Their war was to the end – to victory or death.[61] Another manifesto of H. S. R. A. with the quotation "THE FOOD ON WHICH THE TENDER PLANT OF LIBERTY THRIVES IS THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYR" prominently printed at the top was circulated at the Lahore Congress session itself. In it the revolutionaries condemned the fashion of the day to indulge in wild and meaningless talk of non-violence. They made it clear that they considered Mahatma Gandhi great and meant no disrespect to him if they expressed their emphatic disapproval of the methods advocated by him for the country's emanicipation. They declared that they believed in violence, not as an end in itself but as a means to a noble end. They courted the advent of such a revolution that would recognise (establish) the safety of individual liberty.[62]

After the failure of their attempt on the life of Lord Irwin, the main activities of the H.S R A. were directed towards an attempt to rescue Bhagat Singh and his co-accused. Hans Raj first attempted to introduce stupefying gas into the Court-room, but was unsuccessful. It was then decided to rescue only Bhagat Singh and Dutt, who as convicts, were taken from the jail to the court in a seperate van. For this purpose a party armed with revolvers and bombs was arranged and headquarters were established in a house on Bahawalpur Road, Lahore. About this time, Bhagwati Charan and Sukhdev Raj took some bombs out into the waste land near the Ravi in order to test them. Apparently one bomb exploded prematurely and Bhagwati Charan was killed and his companion received injuries in the left foot. The body of Bhagawati Charan was hidden, and the rescue plans were abandoned. The party dispersed when another bomb exploded, this time in the Bahawalpur Road house, on June 6, 1930. Hans Raj 'Wireless' was now made the Provincial Organiser for the Punjab with Inder Pal as his assistant, and in order that the party should not be identified with the H.S.R.A. the name was changed to the *Atishi Chakar*, or 'Fire Ring' Party.[63]

Vaisampayan, who along with Sukhdev Raj was an eye-witness to the death of Bhagwati Charan, has left a graphical description of the tragic event. On May 28, 1930, they took a pin bomb to test it in the jungle on the other side of the Ravi. Bhagwati Charan and Sukhdev Raj knew the art of paddling and all the three rowed to the other side in a boat. The pin of the bomb was a bit loose. Bhagwati Charan did not allow his comrades to test the bomb and he himself took out the pin. The bomb exploded with a terrific sound whitle in his hands A splinter passed through the left leg of Sukhdev Raj also. Vaisampayan tore away all the clothes except a drawer and the coat on his body and began to bandage the wounds of Bhagawati Charan which were too many He asked Bhagwati in a weeping tone : 'Why did you take this risk?' Bhagwati calmly and with a smile replied : "This too was to our good. If any among you two were to be wounded, how could I show my face to Azad ?" After some struggle with death, ultimately Bhagwati Charan succumbed, but not before declaring his last wish : "My death should not be an impediment to the efforts to rescue Bhagat Singh and Dutt. Only if that task is carried out, my soul shall rest in peace." He also reminded his comrades about their duty towards their Bhabi (Durga Bhabi, the wife of Bhagwati Charan). Durga Bhabi and Sushiladi could not be taken to the jungle to take a last glimpse of this martyr Dhanwantari, Azad and Madan Gopal, dug a grave in the jungle and buried the corpse of Bhagwati Charan. They could not take the risk of cremating his body and there was not sufficient water in the river to consign the dead-body to waters. Thus –

> The noblest had fallen,
> He was buried obscurely in a deserted place,
> No cross, no enclosure, no tomb-stone
> To tell his glorious name ![64]

But the last wish of Bhagwati Charan could never be carried out. Meanwhile, the H. S. R. A was riven with internal dissensions and strangely this meant no subsidence of terrorist acts. As Williamson remarked :

> With the removal of Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt and a number of others of their way of thinking in Bihar, the United Provinces, the Punjab and Sind, the movement in northern India quickly lost its communist tinge and the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association, though retaining the same title, reverted to terrorism pure and simple.[65]

Even by the end of 1929 and before the death of Bhagwati Charan, discipline in the party seems to have had slackened very much, mutual suspicions were rampant and the death of Bhagwati Charan certainly was a profound loss – perhaps the only theoritician the party still had was lost. Even in 1929, the first act of defiance (of party discipline) was performed by Yashpal who had eloped with a girl, Prakashvati, without any consultations with, or prior intimation to, the party. This same person was to defy the orders of the commader-in-chief, Azad, not to blow up the Viceroy's train and proceeded with that action on his own. It may not be far-stretched to suppose that it was this attempt on the life of Lord Irwin that tied his hands (and heart) in the matter of giving clemency to Bhagat Singh and others. Naturally, Azad was very much distressed by this state of affairs and had decided to break up the central committee first, and subsequently even the centralized organisation of the party. While breaking up the party, Azad had distributed equal shares of arms and ammunition of the party to the representatives of different areas and gave one share to Yashpal also though he did not represent any area as such. He asked everybody to independently organize and work for revolution in their own areas. This seems to be a final and desperate bid by Azad to end the mutual bickering within the party.[66] This breaking-up of the party seems to have taken place some time before the Lamington Road police station shooting case which happened on October 9, 1930. Dhanwantari and Durga Bhabi were given charge of the Punjab region and Yashpal went away to Mathura. The Delhi centre was disbanded.[67] This Delhi Centre was started after the institution of the First Lahore Conspiracy case in which Bhagat Singh, etc., were the accused.

Meanwhile, the Civil Disobedience movement started by Mahatma Gandhi was raging in full swing and police everywhere perpetrated cruel atrocities on the Satyagrahis. They did not even spare women who were humiliated in many places in India. Sir Malcolm Hailey of Bombay seems to have had stood at the front rank of the authorities thus humiliating and beating lady volunteers. In Bengal, a new and intense phase of terrorism started with the electrifying effects of the daring Chittagong Armoury raid. Everywhere the youth was impatient for some sort of strong 'action' and this was also reflected in the activities of the H.S.R.A. (though it was in the deteriorating stage). 'Booby trap' bombs were arranged in Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Sheikhpura, Lyallpura and Rawalpindi, and a police officer and a Head Constable were fatally injured by these explosions. Some abortive attempts to rob the cashier of the officer of the Controller of Military Accountants, Rawalpindi, were made. Some bombs were thrown at different places and on different days, but with no actual harm done to anybody. All these actions formed the subject-matter of the Second Lahore conspiracy case, the trial of which started in November, 1930.[68]

We have also seen that after the first Lahore Conspiracy case, Bhagwati Charan, Yashpal, Azad and others, shifted the head-quarters of the party to Delhi. The attempt to blow-up the Viceroy's train was planned from this head-quarter at Delhi only. Until the above mentioned breaking of the party,

> The main head-quarters of the H.S.R.A. was in Delhi, where the leading spirits were C. S. Azad, Bhagwati Charan, Yashpal and Kailashpati. In the summer of 1929, Gwalior had been the scene of meetings, and there picric acid and guncotton had been prepared. In November 1929, a meeting was held in Cawnpore when provincial representatives for the U. P., Delhi and Rajputana were appointed and arrangements were made for liason with the Howrah group of revolutionaries. At another meeting at Cawnpore in February 1930, Yashpal was appointed Provincial organiser for the Punjab, and it was then decided to make Delhi the

headquarters of the Central Council of the H.S.R.A. At this meeting, a plan to rescue the accused in the Lahore Conspiracy case and to murder four who were considered to have been un-faithful was drawn up, but, ... the Lahore group failed to carry out the scheme. There were also proposals to form local centres at Ajmere, Jaipur and Jhansi. In January, 1930, Bhagwati Charan drafted the H. S. R. A. Manifesto, 'The Philosophy of the Bomb', and Azad had it printed at a press near Cawnpore. The leaflets were brought to Delhi and distributed from there on 'Independence Day', January 26th, 1930. At this time large purchases of cartridges for rifles, automatic pistols and 12 bore guns were made from a dealer in Delhi through an associate who possessed a license.

.. [On 6th July, 1930] ... Azad, Kailashpati, Dhanwantri, Lekh Ram and Kashi Ram committed an armed dacoity at the Gadodia stores in Delhi city, and carried off some Rs. 14,000 in cash in a motor car, firing in the street as they left in order to discourage pursuit. This loot was distributed to various centres and with the Delhi allotment, a bomb-factory disguised as a soap factory was opened. There large quantities of explosives were prepared in the next few weeks, until, disturbed by the arrests in August in Lahore, the members of the party decided to close down the factory. The explosives were moved to another house, and were recovered by the police in November 1930, when an expert estimated that there was enough material to make 6,000 bombs.

Kailashpati was arrested in October 1930, and made a full statement. In December, Dhanwantri wounded a policeman before he, too, was arrested in the Chandni Chauk. Other arrests followed, and after a lengthy investigation a conspiracy case was instituted in Delhi before a special Tribunal, with Kailashpati as an approver ... [69]

The year 1930 was a year of great mass awakening and agitation. People in lakhs, including thousands of women and children, actively participated in satyagrahas in connection with the Civil Disobedience movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi. The police resorted to the most brutal lathi-charges and did not even spare women volunteers who, moreover, were humiliated in various ways. The humiliation and beating of women volunteers all over India was sought to be avenged by the revolutionaries. On October 9, 1930, at about midnight, Prithvi Singh, Swami Rao, Sukhdev Raj, Durga Bhabi and another (driver), drove to the residence of Sir Malcolm Hailey in Bombay (obviously to attemp to kill him) in a car but found it heavily guarded by the Punjab police. They then drove the car straight to the Lamington Road Police Station, and Durga Bhabi and Sukhdevraj started firing into the police station indiscriminately as soon as they saw some white sergeants coming out from inside the police station.[70]

> Sergeant Taylor and his wife were injured. The assailant's car was driven away and later found abandoned near Andheri. The driver of the car was found and he confessed. ... The driver was made an approver but, after a long trial, the case collapsed in Court with the acquittal of all the accused.[71]

Apart from this, no significant terrorist actions in the Bombay Presidency, seem to have taken place.

Perhaps the above shooting incident was also meant to be an immediate retaliation against the Judgment in the First Lahore Conspiracy case which was pronounced on 7 October, 1930. Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Shivram Rajguru, were awarded Capital punishment while Kishorilal, Mahabir Singh, Bijay Kumar Sinha, Shiv Varma, Gaya Prasad, Jaya Dev and Kamalnath Tewari, were sentenced to transportation for life. Kundan Lal was sentenced to 7 years and Prem Dutt to 3 years rigorous imprisonment. Ajoy Kumar Ghosh, Jatindra Nath Sanyal and Des Raj, were acquitted. In connection with the death sentences, hartal and other protest demonstrations were held at Lahore, Bombay, Delhi, Allahahad, Amritsar and other places in Northern and Western India. At Lahore, picketing of

colleges by students (women included) led to the arrest of seven ladies and more than 30 students.[72]

After this judgment was pronounced, all efforts of the revolutionaries (in N. India) and a militant section of the Congress, were primarily concentrated at securing the commutation of the death sentences on Bhagat Singh and his comrades. An appeal was made to the Privy Council but was rejected. It is quite curious to note that while the whole country was agog with excitement and sorrow at the death sentences and people were determined to try their best to secure commutation of those sentences, Bhagat Singh himself was prodded by a death-wish and was really afraid as to the prospects of commutation materializing into reality. Bijay Kumar Sinha recalls the account of his last meeting with Bhagat Singh in his condemned cell thus :

> Sardar then broke the ice and in a matter of fact tone initiated talk on the subject of our appeal. Pandit Motilal Nehru from his sick bed in Simla had sent a special messenger entreating us to file an appeal in order to gain some time to secure general amnesty for all political prisoners. The talks between the Congress and the government for a truce were expected to begin at the time. He conveyed that we would take his request as one from the entire nation.
>
> I remember to this day every word Bhagat Singh uttered to sum up his own feelings. He said, "*Bhai, aisa na ho ki phansi ruk jai.*" *He had no illusions about any amnesty being granted but he feared that as the prosecution evidence was weak and the trial had been conducted in the absence of the accused in court, the death sentence might be commuted on appeal and he would be then deprived of the opportunity of furthering the cause of the revolution by dying for it He pointed out to me that he could serve the cause best by his death at that juncture.* I agreed with him and *we decided that we should therefore give our consent to a general appeal to be filed in Privy Council, London, only on the technical ground that the Lahore conspiracy case Ordinance under*

> *which we were tried was ultra vires.* He knew that such appeal was bound to be rejected and desired that the interval gained should be fully utilised for more revolutionary prapaganda throughout the country. [73]

Another account cited by Sri Manmathnath Gupta, is also worth quoting:

> The friends in barrack No 14 were having sleepless nights. They smuggled a slip to him. "Sirdar, you tell us as a true revolutionary if you would like to be rescued. May be something could be done even at this late hour," to which Bhagat Singh replied: "I do not wish to make a secret of this fact that it is natural for me to be alive. But I can only live under certain conditions. I refuse to rot in prison or live on parole. My name has become the focal point of the revolutionary party of India. The party and its sacrifices have placed me on a high pedestal. The pedestal is so high that if I am spared *I will not be able to live to that standard. My weaknesses are not known to the public. If I manage to cheat the scaffold, then they will be exposed May be, the revolutionary fire in me will cool down* It may even be extinguished. But if I am hanged like a brave man with a smile on my face, Indian mothers will coax their children to emulate me. Our hanging will substantially add to the number of martyrs in the cause of the freedom of the motherland, so much so that it will no longer be possible for the satanic powers of imperialism to resist the revolution. Of course, there is one thing that even today leaves me uneasy. I have not been able to accomplish a thousandth part of what I aspired to do for the country and humanity. Could I but live, I could fulfil some of these tasks and be happy. It is only out of this desire to be able to serve that I wanted to be saved from the gallows. Otherwise, I consider myself the most fortunate man. Really now I am very proud

of myself. Now I am feverishly waiting for the last test. I desire that it may be expedited.

Yours for ever
Bhagat Singh [74]

Bhagat Singh was also on record as having strongly disapproved of his father's conduct of filing a mercy petition on his behalf. Bhagat Singh seems to have had even demanded of the then Governor of Punjab that they be treated as prisoners of war and executed by a military firing squad !

We have quoted the above long extracts only to show that the later hanging of Bhagat Singh was perhaps his wish fulfilled, perhaps due to the indifference of Mahatma Gandhi. There is much controversy as to what Gandhi did or did not do in order to save the lives of Bhagat Singh and his comrades In reply to a question "What did you do to save Bhagat Singh?" asked of him in the Karachi Congress, Gandhi himself answered as follows :

> Well, I was not on my defence and so I did not bother you with the details of what I did to save Bhagat Singh and his comrades. *I pleaded with the Viceroy as best as* I could, *I brought all the persuasion at my command to bear on him.* On the day fixed for the final interview with Bhagat Singh's relations, I wrote a personal letter to the Viceroy on the morning of 23rd, I poured my whole soul into it, but to no avail. I might have done one thing more, you say. *I might have made the commutation a term of the settlement. It could not be so made.* And to threaten withdrawal would be a breach of faith. The working committee agreed with me in not taking commutation a condition precedent to truce. I could therefore only mention it apart from the settlement. I had hoped for magnanimity. My hope was not to materialize. [75]

Despite these protestations, the fact remains that Gandhi was a bit indifferent to this problem and only pleaded for *suspension*

or *postponement* of the death sentence with the Viceroy. Perhaps he might have tried to utilize the suspension period (which was to be 'indefinite' according to his pleadings) for an ultimate commutation. But the British rulers sensed the weakness of the Congress and Gandhi, and grew obstinate. It is remarkable that the mercy petition filed on behalf of Bhagat Singh was rejected *only after (*and *not before)* Gandhi's meeting with Lord Irwin on February 18, 1931, when according to Gandhi's own version, he said at the end of the talks (over Bhagat Singh's death sentence) . *"I would not take it ill even if you do not give any reply on this issue"* [76] Of course, people may defend Gandhi saying that it was only a 'diplomatic' statement of courtesy which in reality demanded some reply. But Gandhi's tenor was sufficient to assure Irwin that heavens would not fall down on their heads if Bhagat Singh, etc., were executed and Congress would not take any militant action in consequence thereof. Of course, the whole Congress Working Committee, not Gandhi alone, should share the blame but then, as Subhas Bose put it, the C.W C. consisted solely of Gandhi's 'yes-men'. The death of Motilal Nehru before Gandhi-Irwin talks took any definite shape was quite tragic and there was nobody else of that stature and independent mettle to confront any wrong policies of Gandhi in the C. W. C

But to accuse Gandhiji of 'betrayal' of Bhagat Singh and his comrades would be to go to the other extreme. It would be stupid and silly to hurl such accusations. First of all, the revolutionaries themselves were yearning for martyrdom and they did not take any meaningful step which could soften the Government's attitude towards them. Secondly, knowing Gandhi to be a man of many fads, if anybody expected strong and militant postures from him before the Viceroy, he would have been the most stupid man on earth. Given Gandhi's fads, idiocyncracies and limitations, we have to concede that he did what all *he* could to save Bhagat Singh but we can only lament that what he did was not all what a *sensible* politician could do in those circumstances. Even Subhas Bose, Gandhi's rival in Congress, speaks in a self-contradictory way. At one place he says, "It must be admitted that he [Gandhi] did try his very best", but immediately goes on to say :

> I ventured the suggestion that he should if necessary, break with the Viceroy on the question, because the execution was against the spirit, if not the letter of the Delhi Pact. I was reminded of a similar incident during the armistice between the Sinn Fein Party and the British government, when the strong attitude adopted by the former, had secured the release of an Irish political prisoner sentenced to the gallows. But the Mahatma who did not want to identify himself with the revolutionary prisoners, would not go so far and it naturally made a great difference when the Viceroy realised that the Mahatma would not break on that question ... [77]

Perhaps Bose also had the same thing in mind which I have. If the Mahatma were to be, or could transform himself for the moment to be, a De Valera, perhaps he would have taken a very rigid course and secured the commutation, if not release, of Bhagat Singh and his comrades (much to the chagrin of Bhagat Singh and his comrades). But then how could any one expect the Mahatma to be a De Valera? [78]

But before the fate of Bhagat Singh and his comrades was finally sealed, a tragic encounter took place in Allahabad in which Azad was killed. Manmathnath Gupta's account of this encounter is worth quoting in detail:

> Chandra Sekhar Azad was killed in a gun-fight in Alfred Park, Allahabad on February 27, 1931. Almost all authorities are agreed that the police had prior information and they suddenly surrounded the park. At that time Sukhdeoraj was having a chat with him. Sukhdeoraj managed to escape as he had on previous occasions. Later on the revolutionary party held Birbhadra Tiwari guilty for his death. All the persons who have a first hand knowledge of the affair have accused Birbhadra in their memoirs. Azad had been an absconder since September 26, 1926, when he was wanted in connection with the Kakori hold-up. Born in abject poverty he was also academically the least

qualified. But the ideological and military type of discipline to which he had been subjected and the training which he had received during his association with the Benaras and Shahjahanpur branches of the party, stood him in good stead and in the new set-up he was easily accepted as the unquestioned leader. Few revolutionaries had eluded the clutches of the police for such a long time excluding, of course, the revolutionaries who escaped from the country. During these hectic years Azad was always ready to lay down his life and readily associated himself with most risky assignments.

Azad and Sukhdeoraj were sitting in Alfred Park when a police officer, Bisheshar, accompanied by one Dalchand, who could identify Azad, reached the Park. Dalchand recognized Azad and he went away to give the good news to the police chief Nutt Bower, who came immediately. He parked his car ten yards from the place where Azad was sitting. Shots simultaneously rang out from both sides .. The gun battle went on for some time ..

Azad was hit by a bullet and he died. Some think that seeing the hopelessness of the situation Azad shot himself as he had taken a vow never to be arrested alive.[79]

On March 23, 1931, as opposed to normal jail conventions whereby prisoners are hanged in the early morning hours, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, were hanged at 7-30 p.m. The government did not hand over their dead bodies to their relatives nor take them out through the main gate even. The authorities were so terrified that they made a breach in the jail wall to the rear of the prison, and from there loaded the dead bodies in lorries and took them to a secluded spot on the banks of the Sutlej, and cremated the bodies there. Manmathnath Gupta says that the bodies were cut to pieces, loaded in sacks and then burnt at the secluded spot.[80] But what seems to have had really happened was that the pyres were lit on the banks of the Sutlej by pouring Kerosene oil (which is against

the Hindu or Sikh traditions) The bodies were taking a long time to burn to ashes. The European police were scared of some crowds coming in pursuit of the dead bodies (the whole of Punjab was agog with excitement on that day), and hurriedly cut them to pieces so that they would burn quickly and when actually a crowd came too near, they threw the burnt and unburnt remains into the river waters and ran away."[1]

The executions provoked country-wide protests and *hartals* were observed in almost all major cities of India. In this connection, when an attempt was made in Kanpur to impose a *hartal*, it was met with stiff Muslim resistance and deplorable communal riots ensued in which the Hindus were the chief victims Sri Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, the Editor of *Pratap*, and a most respected leader who was very close to Azad, Bhagat Singh and other martyrs, courted martyrdom in a most noble manner when Muslim fanatics cut him down when he was engaged in rescuing hundreds of Muslim families from trouble-spots. At Karachi, protest demonstration was held by Naujawan Bharat Sabha volunteers (wearing red shirts) when Gandhi alighted at the Malir Railway Station, 13 miles distant from Karachi They shouted slogans like "Down with Gandhism", "Gandhi go back" and presented him black flowers as a mark of protest At the Karachi Congress session itself the Bhagat Singh issue dominated all other issues on the agenda. Pattabi Sitharamaiah writes thus:

> The Karachi Congress which should have met under the radiance of universal joy met really under the gloom cast by the news of the execution of the youths, Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukh Dev. The ghosts of these three departed youngmen were casting a shadow over the assembly. It is no exaggeration to say that at that moment Bhagat Singh's name was as widely known all over India as Gandhi's. Gandhi, inspite of his best efforts, had not been able to get the sentences of these three youths commuted. That was not all. They who were praising Gandhi for his strenuous efforts to save their lives began to put forth volleys of wrath over the language to be adopted in regard

to the resolution to be moved for the three martyrs. It is really a point of doubt even at this distance of time, as to which resolution was the more arresting one at Karachi—that relating to Bhagat Singh or that relating to the ratification of the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement. The resolution relating to Bhagat Singh was taken virtually as the first on the agenda . . The point at issue on the Bhagat resolution was whether the phrase "while dissociating from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form", should be incorporated in recording the admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of himself and his comrades We give the resolution below:—

BHAGAT SINGH AND HIS COMRADES

This Congress, while disassociating itself from and disapproving of political violence in any shape or form, places on record its admiration of the bravery and sacrifice of the late Bhagat Singh and his comrades syts. Sukh Dev and Raj Guru, and mourns with the bereaved families the loss of these lives. The Congress is of opinion that this triple execution is an act of wanton vengeance and is a deliberate flouting of the unanimous demand of the nation of commutation. This Congress is further of opinion that Government have lost the golden opportunity of promoting goodwill between the two nations, admittedly held to be essential at this juncture, and of winning over to the method of peace of the party which, being driven to despair, resorts to political violence.[82]

It is noteworthy that this resolution was drafted by Gandhiji himself and was moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and this was stronger in tone and content than the Serajgunje resolution of 1924 in praise of Gopinath Saha over which Gandhiji so seriously crossed swords with C. R. Das ! Even this was objected to by a large number of delegates who wanted the phrase 'disassociating from and disapproving of' to be completely deleted.

That the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and his comrades had awakened the nation as never before and raised the warm blood of innumerable youths to a boling-point is beyond dispute. But at the time, the state of Bhagat Singh's organization—the H.S.R A., was far from satisfactory. We have seen that some time before October, 1930, Azad thought it prudent to break up the party and give independent powers to the regional units. It seems that the hitherto mentioned *Atishi Chakar* or 'Fire ring' party gained momentum in Punjab at that time. One of the most spectacular terrorist acts in the Punjab was

> . the attack on His Excellency the Governor of the Punjab as he was leaving the Convocation at the Lahore University Hall on December 23rd, 1930. Hari Kishen, of Mardan, fired at short range, but fortunately only injured his Excellency in the arm, although an Assistant Sub-Inspector, Charan Singh, was shot dead... Hari Kishen and another were arrested on the spot. The former was sentenced to death and, subsequently Ranbir Singh, Durga Das, and Chaman Lal, his associates, were convicted of conspiracy and also sentenced to death. [83]

We have noted before that the Second Lahore Conspiracy case was sent for trial in November, 1930, and Yashpal, Hansraj 'wireless', and Azad, were among the absconders in that case. The trial lasted three years and involved Amrik Singh, Gulab Singh, and Jehangir Lal. They were sentenced to death, but the sentences were commuted to transportation for life. [84]

We have also noted that the Delhi conspiracy case was instituted subsequent to the arrest of Kailashpati and his confession. This Kailashpati was said to have been credited with a prodigious memory, and

> ... mentioned scores of persons from Calcutta to Lahore. Even a person who had given to the revolutionaries some water found himself being interrogated as a consequence. He did not even spare Nehru. [85]

The Delhi conspiracy case dragged on for a number of years. After spending Rs 3 5 lakhs and finding that much time and money would be required to conclude the case, the Government withdrew it on February 9, 1933 The arrested persons were tried individually Dhanvantari was sentenced to 7 years R. I. Vatsyayan, Vimal Prasad and Babu Ram Gupta were tried but only Vimal Prasad was sentenced to 3 years R I. Vaishmpayan and Bhawani Sahay were held in detention.[86]

We have noted that there were as many as 7 approvers in the Lahore conspiracy case in which Bhagat Singh was hanged. It was natural for the revolutionaries outside as well as for those convicted, to nourish great hatred and vengefulness against these approvers. During the trial of the Bhuswal Bomb case, Bhagwan Das Mahore shot Phandindranath Ghosh, one such opprover. Ghosh did not die and Bhagwan Das was sentenced to transportation for life.[87] Later on, Phanindra Nath Ghosh was struck by an assailant with a *bhujali* on the head while he was talking to his friend, Ganesh Prasad Gupta, in Meena Bazar, Bettiah, at about 7 p. m. on 9 November, 1932. Ganesh was also cut down by another assailant when he tried to catch the first assailant. Phani and Ganesh were taken to hospital and died there on 17 November, and 20 November, respectively. The two assailants, Baikunth Sukul and Chandrama Singh, were later arrested and tried for murder. The Sessions Judge sentenced Baikunth Sukul to be hanged and acquitted Chandrama Singh. The High Court confirming the death sentence of Baikunth Sukul, he was eventually hanged.[88] In Poona, Sir Ernest Hotson, the acting Governor, was fired at twice by a student of the Fergusson College, Vasudev Balavant Gogate. The first bullet was deflected by the stud of a notebook in his Excellency's pocket and the second went wide. Gogate was sentenced to eight years rigorous imprisonment.[89]

In the early morning hours of 23 January, 1932, Yashpal was arrested from the house of an Irish woman named Mrs. Jafar Ali @ Savitri Devi, in Delhi, after a revolver duel. He was sentenced to 14 years R.I., and Savitri Devi to 1 Year

R I. for harbouring an absconder.[90] Sukhdev Raj who managed to escape in an earlier encounter with the police on May 3, 1931, in Shalimar Bagh, Lahore, leaving a young revolutionary Jagdish heroically laying down his life while resisting the police and who was also present when Azad was shot dead but managed to 'give a slip', was later caught and tried by a special Tribunal and was sentenced to only 3 years R.I.[91] Hansraj 'wireless' was arrested on 3 June, 1932, at Hyderabad, Sind. Durga Bhabi was arrested on September 12, 1931, but since the Lahore and Delhi conspiracy cases in which she was an absconder had already concluded, and the Lamington Road Police station shooting case ended in a fiasco for the prosecution, she was released after about a year's detention under Regulation III of 1818 With those arrests and prosecutions, the revolutionary terrorist activities in Upper India especially the activities of H.S R.A. and its later splinters, seem to have come to an end.

It is curious to note that while the terrorist movement in the North was thus dying down, it had to an extent succeeded in penetrating to the South at that very moment. Interestingly, this penetration of H.S.R A. into the Madras province was said to have been facilitated by the followers of a certain *Hindustani Samyavadi Sangha* whose manifesto was said to have been drafted by Subhas Bose himself.[92] According to the logic of the Sangha, communists were to be preferred to terrorists and terrorists were to be induced to hold their hands in patience against the time when the masses could be organised and armed for the final civil war and social revolution.[93] Only in the Madras province this new party's activities came to any lime-light, and it seems to be due to the untiring efforts of Jibanlal Chatterji, Dutt, and Mukunda Lal Sircar.

> Both Jibanlal Chaterji and Batukeswar Dutt were serving their sentences in the Trichinopoly jail where also Mukunda Lal Sircar, the then secretary of the All India Trades Union Congress was imprisoned. During the latter half of 1932 these Bengalis held regular classes and lectured their Madrassi fellow convicts on revolutionary policy and methods.

Bhagat Singh and his comrades were extolled as national heroes; political assassinations and dacoities were justified on philosophical grounds; Instruction was given in the making of bombs; and oaths of service to mother-land were administered to a large number of Madrassi political convicts just prior to their release. At the end of the year, Mukunda Lal Sircar communicated Bose's new programme to this group, and on his release a few months later, he lost no time in informing Bose of the enthusiastic reception of his scheme and offering his own support and that of the All India Trade Union Congress, to the Samyavadi Sangha then in the making. By the middle of May 1933, a large number of those who had fallen under these malign influences had regained their freedom, and all were pledged secretly to enlist more members. At this point a meeting was held in Madras at Mukunda Lal Sircar's suggestion, to review the position and to map out a plan of campaign. A proposal to call the party, 'The Hindustani Samyabadi Sangha' was eventually discarded in favour of the older and more high-sounding name 'The Hindusthan Socialist Republican Army, Madras branch.' The Army's object was declared to be the establishment of a socialist form of republic in India by means of an armed rebellion. The party already possessed some revolvers and ammunition, secured from Pondicherry, and more were to be collected and paid for by the proceeds of a series of dacoities and robberies which were then planned. Organisers were appointed for different areas, party names were given and secret symbols were agreed upon for such words as "firearms", "assassinations" and "dacoities". The conspiracy ran for two months more, when it was brought to light by the arrest in Madras of two of its members who were about to proceed to the interior of the Presidency to commit an armed dacoity. Investigation revealed the fact that the new party's activities extended to no less than twelve districts, and resulted in the

arrest of twenty-three of the more prominent of its members on a charge of conspiring violently to overthrow the Government. Twenty of them were eventually sent for trial by the High Court, of whom seventeen were convicted and sentenced on the 24th April, 1934. Mukunda Lal Sircar (whom the Judge described as 'the brain behind the conspiracy') to four years' rigorous imprisonment and the remainder for lesser periods.[94]

To come to the terroristic activities in Andhra proper, ... in April 1933, half a dozen bombs were found in a boat in Coconada; one of these exploded and severely wounded an inquisitive coolie. Investigations disclosed the existence of a local secret society with terrorist aims. The organiser was Prathibada Bhayankara Venkatachari, who had formed the party in 1931. As a result of searches, cartridges, daggers, chemicals, and gun-powder were found. Four dismantled bombs were also found in the backyard of the house of one of the accused. Various plans to commit dacoities and murder officials have been abortive, and the last, to murder a Deputy Superintendent of Police, was frustrated as the members had to hide their bombs in a boat, where the unfortunate coolies found them. From addresses found in Venkatachari's house it was learnt that the party had connections with known terrorists in the United Provinces, Bombay, the Punjab and Bengal. Venkatachari, who was absconding, was arrested on September 11th, 1933, at Kazipet Railway station and a revolver was found on his person. Two more revolvers and over 50 cartridges were found in his baggage. Nine persons were subsequently arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, but on appeal seven were acquitted, while the sentences of Venkatachari and K. Kamasastri under the Explosive Substances Act were reduced to seven and four years' rigorous imprisonment respectively. While undergoing trial, Venkatachari was found attempting to escape by boring a hole in the roof of his cell. For

this he was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment.[95]

Prathivadi Bhayankarachari was transported to the Andamans Perhaps, he was the only Telugu patriot after the unfortunate 'Aggi Raju' (who died in the Andamans) to have been transported there. The Government at that time made it a policy to send all terrorists with sentences of 5 years or more to the Andamans, and Bhayankarachari came within that orbit.

Apart from the above-mentioned Madras Conspiracy case, certain terrorist actions wholly attributable to persons from outside the province were committed in the Madras province. The most spectacular one was that of the Ootcamund Bank Robbery in which four youths succeeded in decamping with Rs 3000/– from the Travancore National Bank branch at Ootcamund. Subsequently, all four of them were caught and were found to have belonged to the Punjab province. They were sentenced to life transportation, but on appeal it was reduced to 10 years' R I. In Royapuram, Madras, a bomb exploded while being carried by one Roshanlal, a terrorist absconder from the Punjab, and he was killed on the spot on May 1, 1933. This led to police investigations and searches and to an encounter with a terrorist group in a house in Royapuram, Madras. There was a brief exchange of fire in which a constable was injured and one terrorist, Govinda Ram, was shot dead and the other three – Hiralal, Shambunath, and Prem Parkash, were arrested. The house was found to be a regular laboratory for the manufacture of bombs and dynamite, etc. This was a part of the plans of the terrorist organization of Punjab to start work in the Madras province and one Sitanath De, a Bengali revolutionary, was said to be their leader and guide.[96] Apart from these sporadic activities, no other instances of terrorism were reported in the Madras province. South India, in general, seems to have abhorred the terrorist methods of resistance to the alien government. Here the methods of mass struggle, whether by non-violent parties or parties wedded to violent revolution, were more welcomed. So we see that powerful peasant movements take root in

Andhra and also in Kerala, and Communist parties register a phenomenal success in these two provinces in the years to come. In Madras also we find a sufficiently strong but quite 'moderate' working class movement.

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1932–48 tenure as the leader of the government of the Irish Free State, established the autonomy of Ireland on a firm footing by changing its name to Eire, and giving it a new constitution. Two times president of the Republic of Ireland. "His death at the age of 92 in August 1975 ended an era; the establishment of the autonomy of the Irish republic was predominantly the result of his influence."

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CHAPTER VIII

ZENITH OF TERRORISM IN BENGAL

We have learnt in Chapter VI that after the promulgation of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Ordinance in 1924, and its subsequent certification by the Governor and Viceroy to pass it off as an Act of Legislature, not much overt revolutionary activity was noticed since most of the leaders were behind bars. We have also seen that almost all the prisoners under B.C.L.A. were released by September, 1928. So it was only after 1928 that the revolutionaries had any real chance to revive their activities Meanwhile, they played a prominent part in the historic Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress in 1928.

CALCUTTA SESSION OF THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

We have seen that Subhas Chandra Bose, Anil Baran Roy and S. C. Mitra, prominent leaders of the Swaraj party were arrested under Regulation III of 1818, and prior to that as many as 17 revolutionary leaders were also detained under the same Regulation. While Subhas Bose was in the Bengal jails and also when he was transferred to the Mandalay jail, he had the company of some of these revolutionaries with which he discussed the politics of the day and also tried to chalk out future programmes. Subhas Bose was always pro-revolutionary but was never a member of any of these revolutionary groups. In his student days, Subhas was a member of the New Vivekananda group which was against terrorist activity and secret conspiracy, but which very actively plunged itself into all kinds of social service activities; nevertheless, the suspicions of the secret police were aroused.[1] During his jail-life, Subhas Bose cultivated good relations with the revolutionary leaders. Surendra Mohan Ghosh of Barisal and

Hemachandra Ghosh, the *Barda* of the famous *Bengal Volunteers* group (named by the police after the Bengal Volunteers who organized and protected the Calcutta session of the Congress), were especially close to him. In the jails, the Anushilan and Juganthar leaders seem to have come to an understanding for the merger of both the parties. They directed their followers outside to work unitedly and not to precipitate matters by engaging in any overt activities which might harm the chance of the release of the leaders. Subhas Bose seems to have been the one leader acceptable to all revolutionaries due to his overt sympathies for armed revolution, firm opposition to Gandhism, and neutrality in matters of their inner squabbles. But later, we see that the intra party feuds of the revolutionaries again revived in no time and affected the provincial Congress also. The merger of the Juganthar and the Anushilan, if ever it was achieved in reality, was quite short-lived and within a short time after their release, the Anushilan and Juganthar leaders again fell out with each other. Perhaps they were united only till the successful completion of the Calcutta Session of the Indian National Congress.[2] Many revolutionaries whom I interviewed, and also Leonard A. Gordon on the basis of suggestions of several authorities, stated that Bose was supported by Juganthar revolutionaries and J. M. Sen Gupta by Anushilan revolutionaries during 1928–1929.[3]

But inside the jails, probably decisions were taken to act unitedly in future as also to revive the volunteer corps of the Congress under the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose. Soon after the release of the leaders in September 1938, great preparations were made to host the Calcutta session of the Congress, and the Bengal Volunteer corps was organized with Subhas Chandra Bose as the chief officer—General Officer Commanding. The Volunteers openly drilled and demonstrated lathi plays, etc., on the model of military *Kavaths* (drills). Most of the volunteers and almost all the officers were die-hard revolutionaries with unsagging morale and firm belief in armed revolution. The famous martyr, Jatindas, to whose great act of martyrdom we referred to in the last chapter, held the rank of Major in these corps. In the words of the G.O.C. himself :

The Bengal Volunteer corps came into existence at the time of the Calcutta Congress. For the Congress and the National Exhibition connected with it, a large body of volunteers had been entrusted by the Congress authorities with the organisation and training of the Corps. Though the corps was a peaceful and unarmed body, military discipline and training in military drill was imparted to the volunteers and they were also given a semi-military uniform. After the Congress was over, the Volunteer Corps was maintained and branches were opened all over the province. [4]

It would suffice to name some of the Majors of the Volunteer Corps to unveil its identity: Major Satya Gupta (B V. Group), Major Ganesh Ghosh (Chittagong group), Major Pratul Bhattacharjee (Anushilan, Mymensingh), Major Jagdish Chatterjee (Anushilan), Major Mukul Sen of Borisal (who took part in the Phutia mail robbery case) were only a few to mention. [5] It is curious to note that the Santhosh Mitra group of the New Violence Party was consciously avoided and denied any participation in this Volunteer Corps. The New Violence Party fizzled out in 1927, when its leader Santhosh Mitra and its guide Prof. Jyothish Ghosh, and other activists, took to the organization of the working class after they were released along with the other detenus. When the detenus were released a conference was held at Howrah to welcome them in a big way, and at this conference, Subhas Bose as well as some Juganthar leaders were said to have expressed doubts about the revolutionary credentials of Santhosh Mithra's group. This created much bitterness between Bose and all revolutionaries on one side and the Santhosh Mitra group on the other. The latter were not enrolled into the volunteer corps nor were given any share in the organizational preparations for the Calcutta Congress, and none of their representatives were included in the reception committee. This further inflamed the animosity and Santhosh Mitra took prominent part in organizing and directing a labour march into the Congress *pandal* during the Congress session. [6]

Since we have broached the event of the labour march, it is worth giving some details about it here itself. William J. Hull writes thus :

The second meeting of the Congress was held on December 30, at 4.00 p. m. The hour that had been agreed upon was 2.00 p. m. but several thousands (estimated from 20,000 to 50,000) labourers belonging to trade unions in Calcutta and its suburbs (chiefly members of the Calcutta Port Trust Union, the E. I. Railway Union, and the Calcutta Tramway Union) marched in procession to the Congress Pandal, carrying posters with such inscriptions as "Victory to the Red Army", "Longlive the Independent Socialist Republic of India" and demanded the right of holding a meeting in it and of being addressed by their 'revered national leaders.' ... The labourers forced their way through the gates, and shouted . . "Victory to the Poor Raj", "Victory to Raja Jawaharlal," "Victory to Subhas Chandra Bose." ... An ugly clash was prevented at this juncture by an agreement on the part of the leaders of the Congress and the labourers that the Congress meeting should be postponed for an hour while the labourers were accordingly admitted within the gates ; Nehru was chosen to preside over their meeting ; and his father made a conciliatory address, reminding his auditors that he had already expressed sympathy with the cause of labour in his presidential address, had invited their leader Mr. K. C. Mitter to participate in the Congress proceedings, and assured them of his continued sympathy and support.

... [Then after brief speeches by their leaders Nimbkar, Joglekar, K. C. Mitter, etc.] ... the laborers meeting unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"This mass meeting of workers and peasants from all industries declare that we workers and peasants of land shall not rest content till complete independence is established and all exploitation from and all forms of imperialism cease. We do call upon the National Congress to keep that goal before them and organise the national forces for that purpose."

> ... [Finally] ... Mr. Gandhi arrived at the pandal and was received by the laborers with a great ovation. After making them a brief address of mingled sympathy and admonition, Mr. Gandhi requested them to retire from the tent and outside the gates, and with this request they contentedly and peacefully complied. [7]

A discerning former Director of Intelligence, Williamson, commented :

> The incident [the labour march] was symbolic, not only of the communists' hostility to mere 'non-violent' nationalism, but also of the enormous increase in the influence and powers of organisation of the working classes under communist direction. [8]

It is clear that the workers and peasants march and meetings were planned long before, perhaps after the culmination of the All India Workers and Peasants Party conference on 28 December, 1928, at Calcutta. But the Santhosh Mitra group which was also in the labour unions, might have taken advantage of this decision and diverted the procession directly into the *pandal* even after the Congress leaders refused permission at the first instance.

However, the Calcutta Congress is more remembered for the famous independence resolution proposed by Subhas Chandra Bose in opposition to Gandhiji's express opinion in support of the (Motilal) Nehru Committee report and of the resolution in support of dominion status. Ironically, Bose was also a signatory to the Nehru Committee report. Moreover, Bose as well as Jawaharlal Nehru were parties to the compromise in the Subjects Committee where it was decided that only one year time (not 2 years as previously thought of) should be given for the British government to accept the Nehru Committee's report and grant dominion status ; failing which the Congress would organize (after December 31, 1929) non-violent non-co-operation by advising the country to refuse taxation and in such other manner as might be decided upon. [9] But what could poor Bose do? The revolutionaries of Bengal who

dominated the Bengal Provincial Congress were furious and they took him to task It was decided that Sarat Chandra Bose (Bose's elder brother) should move the complete independence resolution at the open session. But Subhas grew impulsive and he himself moved an amendment to the compromise resolution.[10] Jawaharlal Nehru supported Bose. Naturally, Gandhi felt hurt and said :

> You may take the name of independence on your lips, as the Muslims utter the name of Allah or the pious Hindus utter the name of Krishna or Rama, but all that muttering will be an empty formula if there is no honour behind it. If you are not prepared to stand by your words, where will independence be? Independence is a thing made of sterner stuff. It is not made by the juggling of words.[11]

Subhas' amendment was lost by 973 voting for and 1350 voting against.

It seems Mahatma Gandhi, a pacifist by temperament and a disciplinarian by practice, was not that much impressed by the Congress show at Calcutta. He did not like the strutting, clicking of boots and saluting (of the volunteers), and he afterwards was said to have, in his jovial way, described the Calcutta session of the Congress as a Bertrand Mills Circus (and we should note that the Calcutta session was held at Park Circus, Calcutta !) and this remark was said to have caused great indignation among the Bengalis.[12]

Another very important development after the release of the revolutionaries in 1928, seems to be the systematic capture of the Bengal Congress—especially the district Congress organisations by the revolutionaries. In the words of the ex-revolutionary and brother of Aurobindo Ghosh:

> It is no use denying the fact that Bengal never accepted Mahatma Gandhi's principle of non-violence. The youth of the country only used it as a cloak for furthering their own secret cause. They turned the machineries of the Congress organisation in Bengal into so many secret revolutionaty centres ... .Some of

> the members and office-bearers of more than thirty congress committees like Chittagong, Berhampur, Khulna, Midnapur, Purulia, Mymensingh, Kishoregunj, Tangail, Faridpur, Gaibandha, Naldanga, Bishtupur, Phulgazi, Gossairhat, Madaripur, Gobindapur, Kasba, Joyanagore, etc., were busy planning and carrying out murders and dacoities ... ...
>
> The contention raised by the nationalist leaders that they were a mere handful among thousands of non-violent workers in the country, is spurious logic. What does it matter if they were a handful in the midst of thousands of non-violent workers, so long as they were the pillars and the live centres of the movement? It is they who were giving the open Non co-operation movement a secret and crooked turn.[18]

one may not agree with the comments but has to accept the validity of the facts presented by Barin Ghosh.

THE 'REVOLT' OR 'ADVANCE' GROUP

We have already referred to the move for the merger of both the Anushilan and Juganthar groups which emanated from the imprisoned leaders. We also saw that it was quite short-lived and apart from the longstanding bickerings between the Anushilan and Juganthar parties, the Subhas Bose – J. M. Sen Gupta quarrel in Bengal Congress politics made this unity a still-born child. The official historians of the Anushilan Samiti write thus :

> The Sengupta – Bose quarrel was the saddest event of Bengal Congress politics, the Congress ranks all over Bengal were practically bifurcated because of the said dispute. Both Sengupta and Bose were great patriots; both had made great sacrifices. Subhas Chandra had resigned from the I. C. S., which used to be described in those days as the 'heaven-born service' and Sengupta, a leading barrister of the Calcutta High

Court, had suspended his most lucrative practice and impoverished himself by diverting most of his personal assets to the furtherance of Assam – Bengal Railway strike in 1921. He was the closest associate of C.R. Das after whose untimely demise the triple crown which adorned the head of his leader was, without any discordant note whatsoever, transferred to his head. ['Triple Crown' meant the presidentship of B.P.C.C., that of the Bengal branch of the Swaraj Party and the Mayoralty of Calcutta]. It is difficult to throw any light on the background of the unseemly quarrel between the two leaders both of whom commanded enormous respect of their countrymen. Certainly some evil forces had been working behind, forces of regional patriotism of interested groups hankering after supremacy in Bengal Congress organization, of caste antagonism prevailing in high circles in the city of Calcutta, and so on.

The Sengupta – Bose quarrel was not, however, the cause of the break-up of the unity of revolutionary groups. The ideological differences between Anushilan and Juganthar were no less pressing factors. Anushilan had been gradually leaning towards Marxian Socialism; *The other group was out and out nationalists.* Anushilan's assessments of the changed situation made it more and more inclined to actions of insurrectionary type and mass action; on the other hand, Juganthar leaders still maintained faith in old-type revolutionary actions forged on the model of Italian revolutionaries. Whatever the causes may be, the fact is that the belated unity of the revolutionaries was nipped in the bud. [14]

This Bose – Sengupta quarrel was just like adding oil to smouldering fire and the unity in the revolutionary ranks broke up. The Anushilan supported Sen Gupta while the Juganthar groups backed Bose.

> At about the same time, new developments were causing anxiety to older leaders of both Anushilan and Juganthar. All was not well at their respective 'home fronts'. Sharp discontent developed amongst a section of younger adherents of both the parties over the failure of their elders to provide them with any programme of bold action. Anushilan elders, with their gradually increasing psychological advance towards socialist ideology, deprecated sporadic violence and old type of action-programme, but because of lingering indecision they could not enthuse their young fellow-members with any mass-oriented revolutionary programme. Elders of the federated Jugantar, with a few exceptions, had turned full-fledged Congressites, but were not inclined to give up revolutionary affiliation. So elders of both parties failed to deliver an enthusing programme of action to their followers. But how long could the young blood tolerate a stalemate? They grew impatient and wanted something to do.[15]

Another important factor which prodded the young sections of the revolutionary groups to revolt was the emergence of the H.S R.A. in the North with its clear-cut ideology of socialist orientation and a concrete action programme. After the Saunder's murder case, Bhagat Singh came to Calcutta and took shelter there for some time. There he met many revolutionary youths and inspired them with the zeal for immediate and militant action. Major Jatin Das was already a member of the H.S.R.A., and he played a significant part in arranging meetings between Bhagat Singh and Bengali revolutionaries. Within four months after that, the famous Assembly Bomb case occurred, and Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt (a Bengali) were to electrify the whole nation with their classic apology for revolution and the catchy slogan of *Inquilab Zindabad*. The impact of these events upon the Bengali revolutionaries could not but be quite pronounced. And with Jatindas' death in the Lahore jail after a fast of 64 days, the impatience of the younger sections of the revolutionary groups burst forth. We have

seen how Calcutta witnessed the biggest demonstration of the day, paying homage to Jatindas We have also seen that Jatindas was a Major in the Bengal Volunteers, and the Bengal Volunteers took main part in organizing that demonstration. After his cremation, some Majors of the Bengal Volunteers belonging to the Anushilan, Juganthar, etc , met in September-October, 1929, which meeting is famous in Bengal revolutionary history as the Majors' conference. Majors Satya Gupta, Niranjan Sen, Binay Roy (South Calcutta), Ganesh Ghosh, Mukul Sen, and some others participated in it, and it was decided that something should be done to prosecute revolutionary activities unitedly and that the elders *(dadas)* should be discarded. This was the first sitting of the 'revolt' group [16] However, the subsequent course of this 'revolt' group is not at all clear. Com. Anil Chatterji says that towards the end of 1929, the Revolt group leaders Satish Pakrashi, Surya Sen, Ganesh Ghosh, Niranjan Sen Gupta, Binay Roy Chaudhuri, *et al.*, met again at the Rangpur Conference of the Bengal Provincial Congress, and it was decided that a third party (Revolutionary party) should be formed with concrete action programme. It was planned that simultaneous raids on the armouries should be conducted in 2 or 3 districts (Chittagong, Barisal and Mymensingh were considered for the purpose) and raids on police stations should be made in Calcutta and Dacca.[17] But the Chittagong revolutionaries I interviewed, in one voice, contradicted this version and said that nothing more than a general undertanding that somehow and somewhere spectacular and militant actions should be started, was arrived at in these meetings. [18] Be that as it may, this much is clear that young and militant sections of revolutionaries cutting across their respective party lines sat together to discuss and plan a future programme of action. This was quite a welcome development in the then faction-ridden and *Dada* dominated inner politics of the revolutionary movement.

ONTO ACTION

The 'revolt' group of Bengal was inspired more by the example of the Irish revolution. This appears really strange

since right from 1921-22 onwards, M.N. Roy and other revolutionaries abroad were consistently propagating in favour of socialism and a Bolshevik type of revolution, and two emissaries from abroad, Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukherji, contacted the revolutionary groups in Bengal and conducted extensive discussions with them. Probably, the 'older' leaders of the revolutionary groups were influenced or were being influenced by the example of the Bolshevik revolution, and were devising ways and means to do mass work while at the same time keeping the revolutionary ideals and organisations intact. However, this only meant 'inaction' for the time-being, and the impatient younger sections scoffed at the idea of protracted and monotonous work of rousing the masses and seem to have preferred the short-cut of immediate terrorist activities Of course, they realised the futility of limiting their activities to individual terrorism and wanted to go beyond that stage and engage with the armed forces of the government in daring and self-sacrificing battles They were not much concerned with the ideologies – right, centre or left, but were interested in the only one important goal of driving away the British imperialists. Independent Indians would choose their own ideologies in a democratic set-up–that was their vague sketch of the future So, it was but natural for them to be inspired by the Irish revolutionaries who also acted on the one-point formula of stubborn armed struggle on the basis of nationalism Dan Breen's *'My fight for Irish Freedom'* was their Bible, so to put it. And then, Sarat Chatterji's *Pather Dhabi* and the Doctor revolutionary hero of that novel also inspired them very much They were full of sympathy and feeling for the underdog but as yet they did not think of organizing the underdog or becoming one with the underdog. They were impatient to sacrifice their lives, their all at the altar of the motherland and everything else seemed somewhat paltry to their eyes They were one with Masterda Surya Sen who was fond of frequently quoting the historical words of the famous Irish patriot, Lalor :

> *Somehow, somewhere and by somebody a beginning must be made* and the first act of resistance is always and shall ever be *premature, imprudent, unwise and dangerous.*[10]

This spirit of revolt and zeal for immediate action found its vent in some overt violent activities in the year 1922 itself As was the case, revolutionaries were stronger in the districts of East Bengal (now Bangla Desh) and especially Dacca, Mymensingh, Barisal and Chittagong districts were the strongest centres of the revolutionaries. Out of these four, Barisal and Chittagong organizations were the two prize organizations but we will see soon that the former failed to rise and attack in an organised way while the latter succeeded. But it should be noted that the first overt activity started in the Barisal district (or under the Barisal organisation, to be more precise) at the beginning of 1929 itself.

> Niranjan Sen Gupta and two others, realised that the discontented elements of both parties demanded sensational outrages, formed a new amalgamated party for immediate terrorism based on the methods such as surprise attacks on armed police posts, and guerrilla warfare as described in Dan Breen's 'My fight for Irish Freedom.' The year opened with the murder in March of a Sub-Inspector of Police, Jyothish Chandra Ray, who was stabbed to death in Barisal by Ramesh Chandra Chatterji. The murderer fled, but was captured by students, and was sentenced to death, although the High Court later commuted the sentence to transportation for life This murder was the first committeed by terrorists since the murder in 1927 in Alipore jail.[20]

However, it is noteworthy that this was no squad action and the first concerted action seems to be the Phutia mail robbery case committed by the Barisal group but in the Rajshahi district on 11 September, 1929.

> Six youths ... damaged the head-lights and tyres of the mail lorry and wounded one man with a revolver shot. The driver escaped with the mails by forcing his vehicle to proceed despite the damage which had been done. Three persons were convicted for this crime.[21]

The death by 64 days' fast of Major Jatindas and the mammoth public response to his martyrdom in Calcutta, strengthened the determination of revolutionaries all over Bengal and particularly hastened the Revolt group's plans. The Barisal group immediately reacted to the martyrdom of Jatindas by bringing out a leaflet (the so-called Red leaflet) in thousands of copies and distributing them all over Bengal. That leaflet was intended to inspire the youth of Bengal onto the path of revolutionary activities to serve as a signal to like-minded revolutionaries to initiate action in their respective areas. It was an elaborate argument of the principle, 'maximum sacrifice by the minimum number,' which was supposed to surely awaken the whole nation and involve millions of people in the struggle for independence in due course. It was patently inspired by the Irish revolution and by the example of the great Irish martyr, Pearse. It quoted Pearse who alone, when everybody was reluctant to die, was said to have proclaimed loudly :

> I cannot live. Even if I am alone I shall have to come to the field of activity with the banner of an armed revolution in order to bring vigour in the life of this inanimate nation. With my death a hundred heroes will spring up who will triumph over death, who with their fresh blood prepare the steps to independence of Young Ireland in the next era.

Pearse by his death roused in the nation an indomitable desire for armed revolution and the red leaflet commended that his glorious example be emulated by the youth of Bengal. The leaflet which started with the quotation, "From the seeming stillness of the sea of Indian humanity veritable storm is about to break out," ended with the lines—"No fear, there is no fear, he who will give his life completely will sustain no loss."[22]

The leaders of the Barisal group were making elaborate preparations for their intended outbreak basing themselves in Calcutta. In Machuaa Bazar, they rented a house and were making bombs in large quantities. But unfortunately, information leaked out (probably subsequent to an accidental bomb explosion), and in the early hours of 19 December, 1929, Satish

Pakrashi, Niranjansen Gupta and Ramesh Biswas, were arrested from that house on Machuaabazar street.

> New leaflets, a dagger and other articles were seized. Later a youth, Sudhangshu Lal Das Gupta, a nephew of one of the Rajshahi accused, who entered the house was also arrested, and a bomb was recovered from a suitcase which he was carrying. Among the papers found was a list of the names of the members, of the district organization and a 'group for present action,' consisting in all of forty-three persons. This was followed by numerous searches throughout Bengal and later, from further information received, searches were made in Calcutta on 24 January 1930, and at Panchi Dobani lane, explosive materials, daggers, a wooden model of a bomb, and a wax cast of a bombshell, together with proscribed books, were found. More arrests were made and a case was instituted, charging twenty-seven accused with conspiracy. One of the accused became an approver, and one was tried separately. Eventually seventeen were convicted, but on appeal the sentence of Niranjan Sen Gupta was reduced from ten to seven years' rigorous imprisonment, and none were acquitted The sentences of the others ranged from three to seven years.[23]

How far the distribution of the red leaflets forewarned the Government and resulted in the unearthing of this 'conspiracy', we do not know. But it seems that when the revolt group was really bent upon doing something concrete and in a big way, the publishing of such openly belligerent leaflets was unwise and unwarranted. The Chittagong group led by Masterda Surya Sen also thought so and Surya Sen did not encourage any distribution of these leaflets in his district. He believed in the dictum, 'Do not talk but do.' It seems Pannalal Das Gupta, a lieutenant of Niranjansen Gupta, was sent to give Surya Sen a bundle of these leaflets. Masterda saw a pamphlet and was reported to have said indifferently, 'keep it there'. Pannalal Das Gupta mistook this indifference as a sign of inactivity and reported back to Niranjansen Gupta that the

Chittagong people would not do any thing ! Another young man, Bindu Sen, a friend of comrade Anil Chatterji, was also said to have taken a bundle of these leaflets to Surya Sen who asked him to destroy all those pamphlets !! Obviously, Masterda did not think it wise to forewarn the Government about his intentions. Now, the Machuaabazar bomb case almost broke the back of one of the prize groups of East Bengal, and it was left to the Chittagong group under Masterda to try to confront the all-powerful British Empire and create history.

THE CHITTAGONG UPRISING

The Chittagong revolutionaries opted for a big and spectacular uprising on the (Irish) Easter Rebellion day, i. e, on April 13, 1930. Their main plan was as follows : 1. The armouries in Chittagong would be occupied ; 2 The Telephone office and the Telegraph building, the centre of communication of the district, would either be occupied or destroyed ; 3. The Railway communication between Chittagong and other districts would be severed ; and 4. An all-out effort should be made either to put all the high-ranking European officers under arrest or do away with them. By carrying out all these actions, the alien administration in the district was to be wiped out and an alternate independent revolutionary government was to be set up.[24] Resistance to incoming British troops and police had to be offered till each of the revolutionaries was dead. Thus they were to set a glorious example before the people of India. It is highly significant that this programme was named the 'Death Programme' (or 'Operation Death' in the current phraseology).

We have already seen how particular Masterda was about maintaining complete secrecy. Dacoities for fund-collection were avoided this time and the entire money necessary for carrying out the plans was collected only from the members and sympathisers of the party, who inspite of great personal hardships and in many ingenuous ways, managed to raise and donate their respective shares. This precaution was taken since the dacoities even if they were successful, always

forewarned the police who swung into immediate action and prevented the occurrence of any bigger action by taking drastic measures. The credit for the maintenance of perfect secrecy all through – from planning, resource mobilization, cadre recruitment and training to the phase of final action, should chiefly go to the genius and foresight of Masterda Surya Sen though we cannot in any way belittle the enormous contributions of his trusted lieutenants Ganesh Ghosh, Ananthlal Singh, Lokenath Bal, *et al* Small squads were sent out to dislocate Railway connections to Chittagong and cut the telegraph lines by about 8 p.m. on the appointed day. Exactly at 10 p m., the Police Armoury in Chittagong proper as well as the Auxiliary Forces Armoury at Pahartali were to be attacked, the former by a squad under the command of Anantlal Singh and Ganesh Ghosh, and the latter by a squad under the command of Lokenath Bal and Nirmal Sen. Just about a half an hour before this, the Telegraph and Telephone buildings were to be attacked by another squad. Other squads were to lie in waiting nearby the armouries. It was arranged that as soon as the squads attacking the armouries overpowered the sentries and registered initial success, they would give signals by focussing torch lights into the sky thrice and also by loudly shouting *Bande Mataram* repeatedly. Immediately as the signals were given, the squads waiting nearby were to join the fray. Thus the entire arms and ammunition at the disposal of the enemy was to be seized at one stroke Only the machine gun and a few arms lying at the Chittagong Port were left out of this plan for very practical reasons.[23] All the revolutionaries were dressed in military-like uniforms and the leaders wore the appearance of high-ranking military officers.

Everything went according to the plan. The Police Armoury was seized successfully and each revolutionary was supplied with a rifle, a revolver and a sufficient quantity of ammunition. The Auxiliary Forces Armoury was also occupied and Sergeant Major Farrel who came out hurriedly to confront the revolutionaries was shot dead and so were two Pathan soldiers. However, the revolutionaries could not get hold of any ammunition since it was hidden at some secret place

nearby. Mrs. Farrel and her child were spared by the revolutionaries out of humanitarian considerations, but they came to know later that Mrs Farrel did know about the secret place where the ammunition was hidden So, the machine guns seized by them were useless and they only took a few of them and burnt all the rest. [26]

Meanwhile, the District Magistrate (who effected a miraculous escape from sure death at the hands of the revolutionaries by hiding under his car when the revolutionaries searched all round but quite mysteriously, and very luckily for the D. M. at that, missed to search under the car !), some other European officers, and a few policemen, mobilized their resources, brought the machine gun from the Chittagong port, placed it atop the water tank near the police armoury and began to rain bullets from there on the revolutionaries The revolutionaries too took positions and fired volleys from their rifles. After some determined counter-firing by the revolutionaries, the D.M. and other government-men thought discretion to be the better part of valour and ran away. [27]

> Shortwhile after the cessation of firing from the water works, Masterda Surya Sen, the generalissimo of the revolution addressed the revolutionary soldiers and gave a declaration to the people of the country telling them that under the initiative of the Chittagong branch of the Indian Republican Army the British paramountcy and supremacy had been done away with and an Independent Provisional Revolutionary Government had been set up with Masterda Surya Sen as its Head.
>
> The orders were issued to take as many arms and as much ammunition which might be possible to carry, and the rest was ordered to be burnt by pouring petrol on them. [28]

Accordingly the arms which could not be taken were heaped, petrol was poured on the heap of arms and they were set on fire. At this time occurred an accident – though quite natural and possible in such circumstances, which was quite

a fateful accident so far as the future of the revolutionaries was concerned. Perhaps were it not for this accident, the history of the Chittagong uprising would have shaped itself in an entirely different way. One Himangshu Sen was severely burnt while setting fire to the pile of arms and his loud pathetic cries to save his life moved the heart of Anant Singh who took the initiative and along with Ganesh Ghosh, Jiban Ghosal and Anand Gupta, took the seriously burnt comrade in a car and drove towards the town (the police armoury was just on the outskirts) for arranging medical treatment. They did not return within the appointed time. Here Masterda was quite perplexed and in consultation with Ambicada decided to retreat to the nearby hills 'The two wings were completely separated from each other. Inspite of utmost endeavour for the next few days, both the wings could not be re-united.'[29] Were it not for this accident (including the indecision of Masterda who should have ordered the injured comrade to be shot or deserted), the revolutionaries would have surely gone to the town, taken complete possession of it, seized the money in the banks, and armed hundreds if not thousands of youth and the uprising in breadth and depth would have been many times more greater than it actually came to be. This incident also shows how the entire revolutionary Army was dependent upon the military genius and organizational capabilities of one person i.e., of Anantlal Singh and deprived of that at a crucial moment how the Army suffered heavy casualties and quick defeats subsequently.

For three days the revolutionaries wandered in the wilderness with no food and little water, and finally, on the fourth day, reached a small hillock at Jalalabad, 5 miles distant from Chittagong. While they camped on the top of the hillock, information went out and by evening the armed forces of the enemy came in a train near to the hillock and alighting, proceeded to encircle the hillock and after encircling to climb up and capture the revolutionaries. At this juncture, the revolutionaries were ordered to fire by Lokenth Bal who was entrusted by Masterda with the responsibility of commanding the entire army in the event of imminent confrontation.[30] So

took place the historic gun battle of Jalalabad where for the first time in the history of the revolutionary movement in India, the revolutionaries compelled the enemy forces to retreat with heavy losses. About 82 soldiers of the imperialist army were said to have lost their lives. This battle which started late in the evening apparenty finished sometime after dusk, when it was too dark and hence considered unsafe for the British forces to make any fresh bid. The Revolutionaries were quite jubilant and were talking over about the battle loudly. Little did they know that not all the enemy forces retreated but some of them were perched on the top of an adjacent hill which was at a greater altitude. The enemy soldiers suddenly opened heavy fire with machine gun(s) from the top of the adjacent hill. The fire was directed towards the place from which loud sounds of the revolutionaries emanated. It was as a result of this sudden and unexpected fire that

> Tegra opened the martyrdom gate
> and was followed by eleven in haste.[31]

The Revolutionaries too fired in the direction of the machine guns but, alas, these were not within the range of their rifles. Anyhow, it was sufficient to discourage the enemy forces who stopped firing and went away after sometime. At about midnight the revolutionary army showed respect and full military honour to the martyrs – Harigopal Bal (Tegra, the younger brother of Lokenath Bal), Nirmal Lala, Provas Bal, Pulin Ghosh, Madhusudan Dutta, Jitendas Gupta, Naresh Roy, Bidhu Bhattacharya, Tripura Sen, Sasanka Dutta and Moti Kanungo – and left the Jalalabad Hills and set out for the nearby villages.[32] Obviously, that meant the dispersal of the revolutionary army which unfortunately proved to be final and never afterwards could the forces be again grouped together in any big dimension.

Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Anand Gupta and Jiban Ghosal, who were seperated from the main body due to the accident at the police armoury were fortunate enough to escape from police custody after a shoot-out at Feni Railway Station, and heading seperately for Calcutta every one

of them re-united with each other at Calcutta.[33] But one Amarendra Nandi who was sent by Masterda for some secret (reconnaisance) work in Chittagong, took his own life when encircled by a police force on 24 April, 1930. On the same day Himanghshu Sen who got seriously burnt at the Police Armoury succumbed to the injuries. Swadesh Roy, Rajat Sen, Deba Prasad Gupta, and Manoranjan Sen, died valiantly fighting the imperialist army at Kalarpore on 6 May, 1930. Jiban Ghosal (Makhan) died in a short and swift armed skirmish with the Calcutta police at French Chandernagore (Chandannagar) in the night of 2 September, 1930, and Ganesh Ghosh, Lokenath Bal and Anand Gupta were put under arrest.[34]

Here, another dramatic but shameful performance by Anantlal Singh has to be taken note of. He was said to have quarrelled with Ganesh Ghosh at Chandannagar[35] and without the knowledge of others went to Calcutta on 28 June, and surrendered to the police there (!).[36] We do not know the exact reasons as to why he surrendered or any details as to what quarrel he had with his comrades, but Anantlal Singh himself was reported to have said that it was due to purely personal reasons—his father was on the death-bed and he came to know about it—that he decided to surrender.[37] Some people say that Ananth Singh surrendered so as to persuade some already arrested comrades who gave confessional statements not to become approvers, but it is difficult to agree with this reasoning.[38]

On 1 December, 1930, Ramakrishna Biswas and Kalipada Chakravarty, shot dead Inspector Tarini Charan Mukherji at the Chandpur Ghat Railway station mistaking him to be Mr. Craig, the Inspector General of Police. Both of them were, however, arrested within few hours at a place 15 miles away. Ramakrishna Biswas was sentenced to death and hanged on 4 August, 1931, while Kalipada Chakravarty was transported for life.[39]

Now, to come to activities on the side of the government, the message of raids on the armouries at Chittagong could only be sent by wireless from a ship in the harbour. On 20 April,

reinforcements arrived. In the mean time, i e., for at least two days, there was no administration worth speaking in Chittagong (By hindsight we now see that the revolutionaries lost a golden chance to re-enter with a bang !). But from 21 April onwards, the town was under virtual martial law. By the middle of September, 1930, about 162 persons were arrested but only 36 were sent up for the First Trial in connection with the Armoury Raids case.[40]

> The First Armoury Raid trial began in Chittagong by the second week of September 1930 and by the middle of the next year it was going on in full swing. In all 32 persons, both leaders and revolutionary workers were undergoing trial and were kept in the Chittagong jail. By February 1931 it was jointly decided both by leaders within the Jail and Masterda in hiding, to try to blow up the Jail walls to secure liberation of the undertrial rebels and at the same time to bring about a deadlock in the administration by causing unusual explosions at different centres of the town. In accordance with this plan huge quantities of very powerful explosives were very secretly prepared at a number of places in the town and about half a maund of this deadly powder and a number of small arms were very successfully smuggled into the jail and kept secretly and securely buried at number of places.
>
> In addition, one dozen very powerful land mines not of unusual size were also prepared with long wire connections to cause explosion at desirable moments at different important and strategic centres of the town to bring about a deadlock in the administration. The whole town was then under continual curfew between dusk and dawn and the police cars prowled throughout the night over almost every street of the town. Yet a few unusually bold, courageous, and intelligent, resourceful, young revolutionary workers took the risk and successfully kept buried about half a dozen of these landmines at different centres and road crossings. One was buried under the main staircase of

the District Court building; one was buried at the main gate of the bungalow of the police Chief, one was buried at the main gate of the Circuit House in which the three Tribunal Judges lived ; and one at the main street just below the hill in which the District Magistrate lived, and so on. But unfortunately owing to certain unforeseen circumstances and also as a result of minor inadvertance on the part of some devoted workers the whole plan went awry in May 1931. [41]

It was impossible for the police in Chittagong to secure any credible evidence to convict the accused in this landmines-conspiracy (rescue case). It seems the police authorities at Chittagong were very much worried of entering into the 'bad books' of the higher authorities in the State. Already, due to the extra-ordinary developments in Chittagong (Armoury Raid, subsequent battles with the police, etc.) the police and intelligence wings of Chittagong could not lift their heads before the higher police authorities, and over and above that this, such an extensive rescue operation, occurred in which they were not in a position to produce any credible evidence ! Hence, the prosecuting authorities came to an agreement with the accused in the First Armoury Raid trial, that those of the accused prosecuted in the landmines (rescue) case would confess and be given light sentences only and in return for this, the Prosecution would not plead for the award of death sentence to any of the accused in the Armoury Raid case. The accused were also advised against appeal lest the High Court might, on its own, enhance their sentences to sentences of death (which was not uncommon in those days). [42] Accordingly, in the First Armoury Raid Case, 12 were given transportation for life, two 3 years imprisonment, and the rest acquitted but detained without trial till 1938. [43]

On 31 March, 1931, after a fierce encounter with the police in which a few policemen were seriously wounded, Tarakeswar Dastidar and Benode Dutta escaped to safe shelters under the cover of darkness. [44]

On the 30th August, 1931, Khan Bahadur Ahsanullah, Inspector of Police, who had investigated the Armoury

case was shot dead with a revolver stolen in the Raid, by Haripada Bhattacharji, a youth of 16, as the Inspector was leaving a foot-ball match. The assailant was arrested after a short chase and although the jury returned a verdict of not guilty, he was sentenced to transportation for life by the High Court.[45]

This Ahsanullah was said to be a brute in human form, who was transferred from the Barisal detective department for the exculsive purpose of demoralising and terrorising the people of Chittagong, and he was said to have had perpetrated indescribable, unprovoked and unnecessary torture upon all the Hindu inhabitants of Chittagong, male or female, child or aged. Haripada Bhattacharji who shot dead Ahsanullah was said to have been of 14 years age only and committed that heroic act at the instance of Masterda.[46]

The death of this unusually loyal and devoted Police Officer so much affected the top English officers of the district that they themselves came out openly next morning and disregarding all Government rules, social customs, formalities and decencies, publicly urged Muslim youngmen to begin a communal riot against the Hindus in retaliation. When this mischievous appeal failed those high district officers including the District Magistrate and police Chief themselves rushed in uncontrollable rage and revenge to the nearby office of the Panchajanya, a nationalist Bengali Daily and broke down with hammer blows the Press and the machine. After taking evidence from Hindus and Muslims alike and collecting pictures of police atrocities, Deshapriya J. M. Sengupta exhibited and narrated the events to the people of England.[47]

Thereafter,

On the 13th June 1932, when Captain Cameron was leading a search party at Dhalghat, shots were exchanged and he was killed, as were the terrorist Nirmal Sen and Apurba Sen. Surjya Sen and Pritilata Wadadhar, another girl who was in league with the gang,

escaped. This girl then took a leading part in a raid on the Pahartali Institute when bombs were thrown into the main hall and shots were fired from guns and revolvers during a whist drive, at which some 40 Europeans were present. One lady was killed and 4 were wounded, but further casualties were certainly avoided by someone's presence of mind in turning out the lights. In confusion the raiders escaped but Pritilata Wadadhar, clothed in male attire, was found dead outside. A statement was recovered from her person stating that the raid was an act of war. On the same day four types of pamphlets had been distributed exhorting teachers, students and the public to join in a campaign against British rulers and Europeans. On the 2nd of January 1933, the trial of Ambika Chakraverti and two other raiders began, ending on the 1st February 1933, with the conviction of Ambika Chakraverti who was sentenced to death, although the High Court commuted this sentence to transportation for life Suraj Kanti Guha was sentenced to transportation for life by the Tribunal. On the 16th of the same month a military party surrounded a house at Gariala and, after an exchange of shots, Surja Sen and Brojendra Sen were arrested while trying to break through a cordon. The former was in possession of a revolver stolen in the Armoury raid. Kalpana Dutta and others escaped. Tarakeswar Dastidar now became the new president of the Chittagong branch, and active preparations were made to rescue Surja Sen. On 20th March 1933, Sailesh Roy, who was arrested near the jail when talking to a warder, was found to be in possession of suspicious slips of paper which led to the recovery of a revolver and bombs from a granary, and on the 18th May 1933, a party of military surrounded the group's headquarers at Gahira. After an exchange of shots Tarakeswar Dastidar, Kalpana Dutta and others were arrested. Three stolen revolvers were recovered and later a tin box containing explosives and materials for bomb making were found.

A third case was instituted which resulted in the conviction of Surja Sen and Tarakeswar Dastidar to death, while Kalpana Dutta was transported for life.[48]

Masterda Surya Sen, Tarakeswar Dastidar and Kalpana Dutta, were tried and sentenced in the Third Armoury Raid trial which commenced on June 15, 1933, and the judgement was delivered on August 4, 1933. Masterda and Tarakeswar were put to death in the Chittagong jail on January 12, 1934. It has been definitely established now that both of them were cruelly tortured to death, only their dead bodies were 'hanged' and these bodies were taken away by a British war cruiser "The Renown" and thrown into the Bay of Bengal, a few hundred miles away from the Indian coast. The traitor who was responsible for Masterda's arrest was, however, beheaded just three days before Masterda's death, and just five days before, a small group of four revolutionaries attacked with bombs and revolvers hundreds of European spectators of a football match and injured many Two of the revolutionaries were shot down then and there and the other two hanged after a mock trial.[49] With the death of Masterda, the revolutionary movement in Chittagong could be said to have come to an end.

THE IMPACT OF THE CHITTAGONG UPRISING

At first the news of the Armoury raids in Chittagong was quite sensational and hard to believe for the different revolutionary groups and vast number of revolutionary sympathisers all over Bengal. But once the news was confirmed within few days and especially after Ganesh Ghosh, Ananth Singh, etc., reached Calcutta and gave first hand information, all the revolutionary circles were immediately electrified. It would be apt to quote from the Intelligence Report :

> The news of the Chittagong armoury raids was received by revolutionaries all over the province with amazement. Some could not believe that such a daring coup was the work of Bengali terrorists. When

> the truth was known *the effect was electric,* and from that moment *the outlook of the Bengali terrorists changed.* The younger members of all parties, whose heads were already crammed with ideas of driving the British out of India by force of arms, but whose hands had been restrained by their leaders from committing even an isolated murder, clamoured for a chance to emulate the Chittagong terrorists. Their leaders could no longer hope, nor did they wish, to keep them back, for the lesson of Chittagong had impressed itself on their minds no less than on those of their more youthful followers, and there seemed to be no reason why their over-cautious policy should be maintained. Recruits poured into the various groups in a steady stream, and the romantic appeal of the raid attracted into the fold of the terrorist party women and young girls, who from this time onwards are found assisting the terrorists as house keepers, messengers, custodians of arms, and some times as comrades. [50]

The Government circles were also taken aback by this sudden and unexpected uprising at Chittagong. It may be noted that the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 which was to be in force for five years only, expired on 21 March, 1930.

> After the Chittagong raid, however, the lost powers of arrest and detention were immediately conferred by Ordinance. In July, the Bengal Government asked for the replacement of the Ordinance by permanent legislation, including the lapsed sections of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment (Supplementary) Act, 1925, but was compelled to accept a five year limit for the continuing Bill which was passed by the Legislative Council by a large majority, and became law as Bengal Act VI of 1930 on the 16th October 1930. [51]

It is curious to note that the above referred Bengal Ordinance was issued on the very next day of the Chittagong uprising, i.e., on 19 April, 1930, and that too by Lord Irwin, Viceroy and

Governor-General, and the Chittagong uprising was referred to as the immediate cause for the issue of that Ordinance. Then, when the terroristic activities in all other districts of Bengal rose to a high pitch due to the 'electric' effect of the Chittagong uprising, the Government of Bengal resorted to more repressive laws At the end of 1931, another ordinance was issued which was made into a law as the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1932, in the summer session of the Bengal Legislative Council. This empowered the Government to arrest (without warrant and detain without trial) not only active terrorists but also 'potential' terrorists. The Home Member explained that the government decided to go back to the precedent existing before the Great War in this regard [52] Another startling amendment to the Bengal Criminal Law was made on 2 September, 1932, when the Bengal Legislative Council passed the Bengal Criminal Law Second Amendment Bill which made the attempt to murder as equivalent to murder itself and punishable with death! On 6 September, 1932, another obnoxious Act was passed when the Bengal Suppression of Terrorist Outrages Bill was approved by 58 votes to 12 in the Bengal Legislative Council. The Act was intended to empower officers to arrest suspicious persons by any means at their command, to empower District Magistrates to requisition the assistance of persons for the restoration and maintenance of law and order and for the protection of Government or Railway property, and empower the government to impose collective fines on the inhabitants of turbulent areas. This was characterized by S.C. Ray Chaudhari as legalised terrorism. Mr. N.K. Basu emphatically declared,

> We cannot, by any manner or means, give our support to placing this Bill on the Statute book, as we are deliberately of the opinion that, far from suppressing terrorism, the provisions of the Bill, if not judicially administered, will result in the extension of terrorism.

Mr. P. Banerjee said that the Bill was martial law in disguise. But all their protests and remonstrations were to no avail. [53] We may further remark that every one of these repressive laws

claimed its necessity to the unprecedented scale of terrorist activities dating from the Chittagong uprising.

Regarding the reasons and intentions behind and the terrific impact of the Chittagong uprising, Com. Ganesh Ghosh had aptly summarized as follows:

> The Chittagong uprising of 1930 could neither liberate India nor even the province of Bengal. But that had never been intended. ... They (Chittagong revolutionaries) wanted to set an example before our countrymen and specially before the youth of our country by liberating in fact and in reality the little district of Chittagong. The revolutionary leaders had hopes that if attempts were then made by the people ... youth . at different places to liberate their own areas, their attempts might be successful at some places and at least ... ... cause terrible demoralisation to the haughty and boastful rulers.
>
> This plan of Chittagong leaders could not be realized owing to the unusual precaution the rulers had taken throughout India after .. Chittagong. But it cannot be denied that the Chittagong uprising (and martyrdom of a few dozen youth) ... provided great inspiration ... to prepare for the final struggle for national liberation. By the beginning of the fourth decade the situation in practically the whole of Bengal had become a barrel of high explosives and Chittagong provided the fiery spark .. Almost immediately after the Chittagong uprising practically the whole of Bengal burst out in a terrible explosion, which the British marauders even with their unlimited power, strength, resources and brute force could not in any way check or control.[54]

Ganesh Ghosh also quotes Sir Samuel Hoar, the then Secretay of State for India, who stated that,

> The Chittagong rebellion of 1930 had provided a flood of inspiration to the freedom movement in India.[55]

Kalpanadi in her *Reminiscences* wrote thus:

> ...the idea behind the Chittagong Armoury raid was that they would be able to hold Chittagong for seven days. In those seven days, the police lines would be broken up, entry of the military into the district would be blocked. For seven days Chittagong would be free. On the seventh day, the patriots would die to a man in defending their freedom. This tale would remain inscribed in letters of gold. It would be an unending source of inspiration to all, for ever. . . [and she also bemoaned] ... But they had to get ready to die from the second day itself.[56]

So it is quite clear now as to how electric the impact of this uprising was, and now let us proceed to know about the phenomenal developments in revolutionary activities thereafter.

ZENITH OF TERRORISM IN BENGAL

Immediately after the Chittagong uprising, Ganesh Ghosh and Anantlal Singh who got separated from the main party made their way to Calcutta and greatly inspired the revolutionary circles there. Under this inspiration, the main Juganthar Party in Calcutta became active first under Bhupendra Kumar Dutta and when he was arrested in June 1930, under Manoranjan Gupta. Feverish bomb-making and collection of arms was resorted to. An ambitious programme to kill Europeans wherever they could be found by throwing bombs, to burn the aerodrome of Dum Dum with petrol, to attack and destroy the Oriental Gas Works, to destroy the two main electric stations of Calcutta, to burn the petrol depot of the Burma Oil Company, to disorganize the tramway service, to cut the telegraph lines in the *mofussil* and to blow up bridges and railways lines by dynamite, was mooted by the Juganthar Party.[57] But as David Laushey pointed out, it seems only the first item of this programme was ever seriously attempted.[58] Unity efforts with the other main revolutionary party–Anushilan Samiti, were also undertaken but the arrest of Rabindra Sen Gupta, the leader of the Anushilan and the long-standing rivalry between those groups, foiled these efforts.[59] On August 25, 1939,

Anuja Sen Gupta and Dinesh Chandra Majumdar threw bombs at Sir Charles Tegart's car in Dalhousie square, Calcutta Mr. Tegart, as usual, had a miraculous escape but the driver and four passers-by were injured. Anuja Sen Gupta was killed due to the bomb explosion and Dinesh Chandra Mazumdar caught, tried in the Dalhousie Square bomb case and was transported for life. On the same day, Dr. Narayan Chandra Roy, a member of the Calcutta Corporation, was arrested and he admitted that he manufactured bombs for the revolutionary party. The next evening a bomb was thrown into the Jorabagan police-station compound in Calcutta, but no policemen were injured. On the morning of 27 August, another bomb was thrown into the compound of Eden Gardens police-station, killing a *chaprasi* and wounding three others A conspiracy case connecting the three bomb out-rages on 25 and 27 August, was initiated in which Dr Narayan Chandra Roy was sentenced to 20 years transportation and three others to varying terms from 2 years R.I. to 12 years deportation. All these acts were the work of the Calcutta Juganthar party.[60]

The Calcutta – Madaripur group of the main Juganthar party was said to be responsible for a dacoity at Tala, Calcutta, in April 1930, and for the Armenian street robbery in Calcutta on 17 October, 1930, in which a *darwan* was shot dead and an assailant was caught red-handed. In the latter case the apprehended assailant, Suresh Chandra Das, was tried and sentenced to transportation for life.[61]

In Mymensingh district, many overt acts were carried out in 1930. On 1 April 1930, a member of the revolutionary group, probably a traitor, was fatally stabbed. On 14 May, an Assistant Sub-Inspector was stabbed to death. On 30 August, a bomb was thrown into the house of Inspector Pabitranath Bose and two of his brothers were slightly injured. Some other incidents of bomb throwing and dacoity were reported in 1930. The Mymensingh Juganthar party was found to be behind all these acts.

BENGAL VOLUNTEERS (B.V.) GROUP - THE IDEAL TERRORISTS

Perhaps the ideal of individual terrorism was not so perfectly represented by any other revolutionary group in Bengal as it was done by the so-called Bengal Volunteers group. The legendary figure of Hema Chandra Ghosh is attributed with the undisputed leadership of this closely knit and fiercely dedicated terrorist group This group also seems to have been the one which was singularly bereft of all ideological paraphernalia and inflamed with the one and only aim of terrorizing the British out of India by selective assassinations of notorious British officers. Unlike the Chittagong group, they had no plan for the full or partial liberation of any tract of Bengal (at least for a few days) and never practised – probably they did not think of even – any armed encounters with the police. But the discipline, devotion, and the secret organizational skill displayed by this group is really amazing and of all the revolutionary groups of Bengal, this was the one which had no or a very negligible number of approvers in its midst, nor did any of the group surrender to the police.

The origin of this group seems to be in the pre-war period in a revolutionary group simply called 'Revolutionary Fraternity' organized by Hema Chandra Ghosh. This leader was called the *Barda* (eldest brother) of the organization. The *Mezda* (Middle brother) of the organization, Haridas Dutt, however, seems to have had been an activist of the B. B. Ganguly group; at least, he was one of the participants in the Rodda Company Arms theft case. After World War I the *Barda* decided that all other known activists of the group (except of course himself) should become inactive and revert to worldly life in order to create an impression among -the police that the organization was defunct! At the same time, new groups under extreme secrecy and with unflinching loyalty and devotion to the *Barda* and, of course, to the cause of the mother-land, were to be clandestinely organized.[62] This Hema Chandra Ghosh was said to have been a 'pal' of the famous Bengali novelist Sarat Chandra Chatterji, and was said to have inspired Sarat Babu in the writing of *Pather Dhabi* – an epoch-making

novel which took the place of *Anand Math* in inspiring the youth of Bengal to revolutionary activities in the post-war period.

One Anil Roy, who was the founder or at least the prominent leader of *Sri Sangha* in Dacca, also was a disciple of Hema Chandra Ghosh But in course of time, he along with his Sri Sangha and his wife Leela Nag (Roy) with her *Diwali Sangha,* got a bit estranged from the *Barda.* They no longer wanted to promote terrorist activities but mainly concentrated on social service work. At this stage, the active members of this organization took the initiative in forming the Bengal volunteers at the call of Subhas Bose, who demanded blood sacrifice from the youngmen. The first unit of the Bengal volunteers was said to have been formed, curiously, in Midnapore, which was to become the strongest centre of the B. V. party, perhaps stronger than the original Dacca centre [63] Perhaps this was the reason why the police authorities named this particular group as 'Bengal Volunteers' though we have seen that all the revolutionary groups except Sathosh Mitra's, actively participated in this volunteer corps in their respective areas.

Now to come to the activities of this group, the glorious Chittagong uprising electrified this group too. Benoy Bose of this group single-handedly shot dead Mr. Lowman, the Inspector General of Police, and severely wounded Mr. Godson, the S. P., at Dacca. This incident occurred in Mitford Hospital in Dacca on 29 August, 1930, and Benoy Krishna Bose effected a daring escape. [64] The whole police machinery of Bengal was extremely shaken by this act. But greater calamity was to befall the authorities. The B V party command decided to launch their next attack appropriately on the Writer's Building in Calcutta, the citadel of British power in Bengal. Though Subhas Chandra Bose and the leaders of B. V. advised Benoy Bose to escape to some foreign country—and all arrangements were made for this purpose, Benoy Bose refused to flee India. He said : "To me resting is tantamount to rusting. Moreover, mentally I have already committed myself to participation in

the next action." His firm resolve won the day and the party decided that a suicide squad under the leadership of Major Benoy Bose would attack the Writer's Building. Major Benoy Bose flanked by Captain Dinesh Gupta and Lieutenant Badal Gupta reached the Writer's building a little before 12 o' clock on 8 December, 1930. They gate-crashed into the Chamber of the I.G. of Prisons, Col. Simpson, and shot him dead After-wards, they went into the verandah and indulged in a shooting spree. The enemy camp was totally demoralised by the un-expected attack. The Judicial Secretary, Mr. Nelson, Finance Secretary, Mr. Alexander Murray, and Chief Secretary, Mr Twynam, suffered injuries caused by flying bullets. Sri K.P. Biswas, the then press reporter attached to Associated Press of India, thus commented :

> This daring and audacious raid smashed the myth of impregnability of the Writer's Buildings. The apparent show of power and strength at the Writer's to overawe the natives was unmasked. Cowardice rather than bravery was the measure of the rulers. ...When the wolf really appeared not a soul stirred to come to the help of brother officials on the first floor. They were more eager to save themselves than act gallantly in defence of the Empire.

Meanwhile, the I. G., Mr. Gordon, arrived with a huge posse of armed police. An unequal fight, gone down in history as the Verandah Battle. was heroically fought by the trio. When their ammunition was almost spent they were ready for self-immola-tion, shouted *Bande Mataram* many times, entered a side-room, locked the doors and swallowed the potassium cyanide capsules. Badal immediately died But Benoy and Dinesh in addition to keeping the capsules in the mouth shot themselves and hence were unable to chew the capsules. Benoy Bose died in hospital on the fifth day. Dinesh was nursed back to life only to be ceremonially hanged after a semblance of a trial, on 7 July, 1931, at the Alipore Central Jail.[65] It is noteworthy that the Writer's Building Square (Dalhousie Square) in Calcutta was renamed as Binoy-Badal-Dinesh Bagh (Bibadi Bagh) by the present Left Front Government of West Bengal.

The attacks of the B.V. in Midnapore were no less spectacular. Ganesh Ghosh writes thus :

> Let us take the case of one district only, that of Midnapur. The revolutionary parties of Bengal had then resolved not to allow any inhuman anti-Indian English officers to lead the administration of the district and three anti-Indian Britishers were put to eternal silence in the district one after the other. The rulers in retaliation shot and hanged a number of patriotic youngmen but could not have their Magistrate at the top of the district administration of Midnapur. [66]

Incidentally, Midnapur was also a stronghold of the Congress – perhaps the only Bengal district where it had its own identity and strength, and the Satyagrahas during the Civil Disobedience movement were carried on here with great gusto and popular participation. James Peddie, the District Magistrate, suppressed these Salt Satyagrahas with great brutality and did not spare even women and children who were cruelly lathi-charged The women were said to have been dragged by their hair and the children thrown like play-balls. Several women were said to have even lost their lives due to this repression (!). The B.V. group decided to avenge this brutal repression. Bimal Das Gupta and another revolutionary shot dead Mr. Peddie on 7 April, 1931, when he was inspecting an exhibition set up at a local school. Bimal Das Gupta and the other were very much determined to fight to the last and after the ammunition was spent, to commit suicide by swallowing potassium cyanide capsules. They actually started for the action keeping these capsules in their cheeks ! But fortunately, there was no need to die, nobody dared to pursue them and that night itself they safely escaped to Calcutta. Bimal Das Gupta told me that they were organised by, and were very much fond of, 'Captain' Dinesh Gupta, the martyr in the Writer's Building battle, and their act was also meant to avenge his death. [67] Bimal Das Gupta and other comrades of the B.V. wanted to kill Mr. Garlick who sentenced Dinesh Gupta to death. But the B. V. leader-

ship held talks with the Juganthar and that act was left to be performed by one Kanailal of the Juganthar.[68]

> On 27th July, Mr. Garlick, Sessions Judge, 24 paraganas, was shot through the head while sitting in the court. The assassin was immediately shot down by the Sergeant on duty and committed suicide by swallowing potassium cyanide while lying wounded under the table. A note found on the murderer stated that the act was committed in revenge for the execution of Dinesh Gupta. Mr. Garlick had been President of the Tribunal which tried Gupta.[69]

But a very interesting point which the above Intelligence Report omitted to mention was that Kanailal did not reveal his real name and the chit was in the name of Bimal Das Gupta. This was obviously to distract the police who were on a feverish look-out for Bimal Das Gupta. Bimal Das Gupta was given another dangerous task of shooting to death Mr. Villiers, President of the European Association. This was to be carried out on 29 October, 1931, but the day before, Mr. Durno, District Magistrate, Dacca, was shot at and severely injured, and hence all the Europeans in Calcutta were very vigilant. By the time Bimal Das Gupta, who abruptly entered the room of Mr. Villiers, could take out his revolver from his pocket and fire, Mr. Villiers ducked under the table and was saved. The bullet pierced his shoulder near the chest, but immediate medical attention saved him.[70] Bimal Das Gupta was captured by three other Europeans who were in the room and sentenced later to ten years R. I.[71] Bimal Das Gupta was severely tortured in police custody. His face was so disfigured due to torture that a British Labour M. P. who was then touring India and succeeded in getting permission to see this assassin of Peddie, was shocked and his wife was said to have shrieked at this horrible sight! In the Peddie Murder Case, the manipulated 'eye-witness' failed to identify Bimal Das Gupta. Moreover, Subhas Bose sent three able barristers (B. C. Chatterjee was one of them) to defend his case and the case had to be withdrawn by the Government for lack of evidence.[72] The

next year the B.V. succeeded in killing the new incumbent to the post of D M. at Midnapore.

> On April 30th, while Mr. Douglas, District Magistrate of Midnapore, was attending a meeting of the District Board Office, Midnapore, two youths came up behind and fired five shots, four of which hit Mr. Douglas, who died of his wounds on the same evening. Mr. George, Sub-Divisional Officer, Tamluk, armed guards and others chased the assailants and caught Pradyot Kumar Bhattacharji, who was in possession of a revolver containing five misfired rounds, and a written note in Bengali to the effect, "A slight protest against the Hijli oppression. Let Britain take note by the death of these people and let India awake by our sacrifice. Bande Mataram." Pradyot Kumar Bhattacharji was sentenced to death.[73]

The third British District Magistrate of Midnapore was also assassinated on 2 September, 1933. Mr. Burge, District Magistrate, Midnapore, was to take part in a football match between two local teams. As he walked on the ground, two persons who had mingled with the players closed in on him and riddled him with bullets. He died almost immediately. Both the assassins were shot dead. They were Mrigendra Datta and Ananth Panja, both of Midnapore. The investigation disclosed a 'deep rooted conspiracy' and forty seven persons were arrested of whom six were discharged, two were externed, twenty six were interned in jails under the B.C.L A. Act, and thirteen were tried by a special Tribunal for the offence of conspiracy to murder. Nirmal Jiban Ghosh, Ram Krista Roy and Braja Kishore Chakravarti, were sentenced to death. Four others were sentenced to transportation for life. In a supplementary case, the absconder, Santi Gopal Sen, was sentenced to transportation for life.[74] The cumulative effect of these three murders, in a sequence, of the British D. M.'s at Midnapore, terrorized British bureaucrats. No British officer came forward to accept this 'fatal' post at Midnapore and finally, the

British had to swallow their pride and appoint an Indian District Magistrate for Midnapore.[75]

Incidentally, the last important terrorist act in Bengal also seems to have been committed by the B.V.

> On the 8th May 1934, two Bengalis dressed in European clothes, succeeded in approaching unobserved the Governor's box on the Race Course at Lebong in Darjeeling. One of them, Bhawani Prasad Bhattacharji, abvanced up the steps of the police stand, and, when opposite His Excellency the Governor, drew a revolver and opened fire. He was promptly seized and was almost simultaneously shot by both his Excellency's personal guard and by the Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling. Immediately afterwards the second Bengali, Rabindra Nath Benarji, opened fire with an automatic pistol at His Excellency from directly in front of the box. He also was seized and disarmed. His Excellency and party miraculously escaped injury, but a woman spectaror received a flesh wound in the leg. The investigation which followed showed that the outrage had been planned in Calcutta and Dacca, and that eight persons, all residents of Dacca, were implicated in the conspiracy. The two assailants were sentenced to death, but His Excellency the Governor commuted the sentence on Rabindra Nath Benarji to fourteen years' rigorous imprisonment. Manoranjan Benarji, one of the conspirators, was sentenced transportation for life, other, Amiya Mazumdar, Madhusudan Benarji and Sukumar Ghosh received sentences of 14 years' rigorous imprisonment, and Sushil Chakravarti 12 years' rigorous imprisonment.[76]

Bhawani Prasad was said to have courted martyrdom with great composure and equanimity.

OTHER IMPORTANT TERRORIST ACTS

Apart from the Chittagong group, the B.V., and the main Juganthar party, many other revolutionary groups (mainly

federated to Juganthar) plunged into action in the years 1930–34. The most notable among them were the ones commited by girl revolutionaries, a novel phenomenon in the revolutionary history of Bengal.

> On the 6th of February, while His Excellency the Governor of Bengal Sir Stanley Jackson, was addressing the convocation of Calcutta University, a girl graduate, Bina Das, orginally of Chittagong rose from her seat, walked up the aisle and when a short distance from His Excellency, took a pistol from her robes and fired three times. Luckily the shots went wide .[77]

Bina Das was caught red-handed and after a spirited statement in the court (said to have been drafted by her own father) was sentenced to 9 years R I. in the same year (1932). Prior to this attempt on the Governor, two girls, Santi Ghosh and Suniti Chaudari, shot dead Mr. Stevens, District Magistrate, Tippera, when they secured an interview with him on the plea of presenting a petition for a swimming exhibition to be arranged for them. This occurred on 14 December, 1931, and the two girls were sentenced to transportation for life [78] Two attempts were made on the life of Sir Alfred Watson, Editor of *The Statesman* – one on August 15, 1932, and the second on 28 September, 1932. Luckily, Watson escaped death both times though he was wounded at the second time. The assailant of the first attempt as well as two of the assailants of the the second attempt committed suicide.[79] Attempts were made on the life of Mr. Granby, Superintendent of Police, Dacca, on August 22, 1932, and on the life of Mr. Luke, Superintendent of Rajshahi jail, on 18 November, 1932, but in vain. By the end of 1933, the intensity of terrorist activities began to decline and by the end of 1934 the terrorist movement in Bengal virtually subsided.

Tha Anushilan Samiti as an organisation does not seem to have taken part in any overt terrorist activities, though they were always talking about a concerted uprising all over India one fine day, and were claiming to have been working for that magnificent plan. This brought them derision from other revolutionary groups who only discerned a guise for inefficiency

and inability in those high claims. However, it is true that the Anushilan was developing widespread contacts in different provinces of India. Prabhat Chakravarti, an important Anushilan leader, was arrested on 14 January, 1933, and the addresses found in ciphers on his person brought into light widespread contacts from Amritsar to Mandalay, and Delhi to Madras. An Inter-Provincial Conspiracy Case was instituted in which 3 accused (including Prabhat Chakravarti) were sentenced to transportation for life, three to 14 years R. I., eleven to 7 years R. I, etc.[80] During the year 1935, a very decisive blow was struck at the Anushilan party in Bengal and Faridpur, by the investigation and subsequent trial of what is known as the Titagarh conspiracy case.[81] The Intelligence Report of the British Government of India contains significant remarks about this 'debacle' of the Anushilan.

> Even in the most favourable conditions, only very small percentage of the terrorists' plots which are discussed are converted into action, and *this particular party was most averse to translating such plots into action.*[82]

By the end of 1934, the revolutionary terrorist activities in Bengal virtually subsided, thousands were arrested, hundreds were detained without trial, hundreds were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, and even the general political situation in the country was not 'exciting' - it was a shallow period for even general nationalist srtuggles with the Civil Disobedience movement fizzling out. The 1935 Government of India Act, and subsequent elections to the Central Assembly and Provincial Councils occupied the central attention of the Indian National Congress, and the members and supporters of various revolutionary groups had to lie low in virtual inactivity. Moreover, the historic developments of the period 1930-34, opened before them wide possibilities to do mass work and also taught them lessons about the general futility of individual or group terrorism. So after 1935, the revolutionaries in prisons were avidly reading and discussing marxist classics and were beginning to talk about a 'revolution by the masses, for the masses'. At least about 50 per cent of the activists of these groups after their release, became convinced marxists though not all of them joined the Communist Party of India.

The developments were taken note of even by the Government circles. The Governor of Bengal was able in 1935 to say as follows :

> Without being over-confident, I may fairly say that the main onrush of that wave [the last wave of terrorism] has been broken Let me, however, utter a word of warning. *The history of terrorism shows that if it is neglected when one wave has spent its force, the next wave is bigger and more violent* There still remain in Bengal materials for the reorganisation of terrorist activity and would-be leaders who are only biding their time Our vigilance cannot be relaxed But at the same time it is our duty to spare no effort in the task of reclaiming to useful avenues of employment those who have been misled and are prepared, if given the opportunity, to return to saner ways.[83]

The Government also seems to have had adopted a policy of encouraging discussions about Marxism and Communism among the terrorist prisoners. While terrorism meant surprise attacks on the government by 'unknown' enemies, Communism was for the government an open challenge from a 'known' enemy. The Government seems to have thought, at that juncture, that Communism was the lesser of the two 'evils'.

Anyway, in the years after 1934, terrorism as a policy lost its charm to the ex-revolutionaries or revolutionary minded people, and the era of mass struggles and open challenges to British imperialism was to be ushered in. Revolutionaries had become mature enough to discard individual terrorism, but they were still very far from translating into reality their dreams and plans for a people's revolution.

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57. *Terrorism in India : 1917–1936,* op. cit., pp. 35–36.
58. David M. Laushey, *Bengal Terrorism and Marxist Left,* Calcutta, 1975, p. 75.
59. *Terrorism in India,* op. cit., p. 36.
60. *Ibid.,* pp. 36–37.
61. *Ibid.,* pp. 37–38.
62. Laushey, David M., *op. cit.,* p. 42, and *My interview with Comrade Madhu Banerji,* Calcutta, 11–9–1986.
63. *My interview with comrade Bimal Das Gupta,* Midnapore, dt. 12–2–86.
64. *My interview with Comrade Madhu Banerji,* op. cit.
65. *Chittagong Uprising Golden Jubilee Souvenir,* Sri Nikunja Sen's article, pp. 25–26 & 32.
66. *Challenge,* op. cit., p. 37.
67. *My interview with Comrade Bimal Das Gupta,* op. cit.
68. *Ibidem.*
69. *Terrorism in India: 1917–1936,* op. cit., p. 44.
70. *My interview with Comrade Bimal Das Gupta,* op. cit.
71. *Terrorism in India : 1917–1936,* op. cit., p. 45.
72. *My Interview with Bimal Das Gupta.* op. cit.

73. *Terrorism in India : 1917–1936*, op. cit., pp. 47–48.

74. *Ibid.*, pp. 51–52.

75. *My interview with Bimal Das Gupta.* op. cit.,

76. *Terrorism in India 1917–1936*, op. cit., p. 58.

77. *Ibid*, p 47.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–49.

80. *Ibid.*, p. 53 and p. 189.

81. *Ibid.*. p. 63.

82. *Ibid.*. p. 64., emphasis mine.

83. *Ibid.*, emphasis mine.

CHAPTER IX

COMMUNISM IN INDIA (1919-1934)

Whatever be the bourgeois, petty bourgeois, or pre-bourgeois origins of the ideology of Communism, this much is certain that it owed its defence and development to the tumultous working-class movements that shook the continent of Europe in the early decades of the nineteenth century. But then, without the Industrial Revolution which began almost a century before that, but was not complete till the first half of the nineteenth century, a prolific, intelligent and organized proletariat which could proudly flaunt the banner of communism could not emerge. So, communism as an ideology adopted by the working-class, and in course of time become so mingled with the natural aspirations of the working-class as to be indistinguishable from the interests and the ambitions of the working class, could only develop as an after-effect of the Industrial Revolution and rapid capitalist development in the Continental countries. The European Social-Democratic and Communist parties therefore, to this day, retain their primary working-class identity.

But in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the formation of Communist parties took another route. Either it (the formation of communist parties in such countries) was completely divorced from whatever insignificant sections of the proletariat that were existing in these countries, or even if it had a connection with the indigenous working class movement, that was a very secondary source of its inspiration. The sole or main inspiration to form the Communist parties in such countries came from the educated middle classes dedicated to the cause of national revolution and influenced by the historic October Revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of Russia under Lenin. The formation of the Communist Party of India, at first abroad and later in the mainland, was no exception to this trend.

We have seen how the sustained efforts of the Anushilan and Juganthar parties to effect a general uprising or pitched guerrilla war in India failed by the end of 1915 This also meant the failure of the efforts of the Hindustan Gadar Party which was formed in and directed from the United State of America. Naren Bhattacharji, @ Martin, who was sent by the Juganthar leader Jatin Mukherji to Germany for the arrangement of arms supply from there, did not succeed in his efforts and after an adventurous journey through some Asiatic and European countries, finally took refuge in the United States of America. Here he assumed the name of Manavendra Nath Roy. But here too he was arrested and implicated in the Indo-German Conspiracy case but jumped bail and fled to Mexico. While in the U S A. itself, M. N. Roy was attracted towards the theory of Socialism and in the same city took place the marriage of Roy with Evelyn Trent whose influence over Roy's intellectual transformation to socialism was not inconsiderable. Mexico saw the conversion of Roy into a fully convinced communist due to his connections with the Socialist Party of Mexico and due to the indoctrination of Borodin, the Comintern emissary, who took refuge in Mexico for some time Not only did Roy himself become a communist but persuaded the overwhelming majority of the Socialist Party to follow his example, and became the Founder-Secretary of the first-ever Communist Party in the world, outside Russia. As a representative of this Communist Party of Mexico, Roy sailed to Europe and thence to Russia to take part in the Second Congress of the Communist International which took place in Moscow from July 19 to August 7, 1920. [1]

Perhaps M. N. Roy was the first Indian who became a fully convinced communist though before him, we have seen that, Madame Cama, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, etc , had socialist connections and perhaps were on the road to become fully convinced socialists. But it was only due to the repudiation and exposure of all secret imperialist treaties by the Revolutionary Bolshevik government, and due to firm commitment to the cause of and clarion call for the struggle for national liberation of all colonies and semicolonies, that either Roy or

later Chatto and others could be enthused and gradually become converts to the ideology of communism. This only corroborates the conclusion of Persits that

> In the Eastern countries it was principally the national revolutionary and revolutionary democratic intellectuals that made the first Communist groups that gave rise to a Communist movement. [2]

Though Roy went to Moscow as a representative of the Communist Party of Mexico, he was always taken to represent the Indian affairs only. Lenin had drafted a thesis on the situation in the colonial and semi-colonial countries which indicated the guidelines to be adopted by the Communist movement for such areas He was only too eager to discuss it with M. N. Roy whose extra-ordinary intellectual capacities and impeccable revolutionary past had already impressed the Soviet communists very much even at that early stage of acquaintance. Unfortunately for Lenin and for the International Communist movement, the 'zeal of a new convert' dominated over a cool and rational assessment of the Indian conditions in the case of M N. Roy For about four years M. N. Roy was totally cut off from India and his experience in India before that was only limited to the narrow confines of a secret society's activities. The 'petty bourgeois' make-up of M. N. Roy asserted itself and perverted the proletarian theory and tactics to be adapted to Indian conditions. He put forth an alternate thesis which, in substance, stated that the national movement in India was led by the bourgeoisie which was counter-revolutionary, and hence, the Communists could not enter into any alliance with, or render any support to, it. He argued that India was already drawn into the capitalist world market and became integrated with the international capitalist system. Hence, the working classes were to be separately organized by the communists with much stress on the ultimate aim of Socialism. Of course, he supported the cause of the struggle for independence from the British rule, but that was to be achieved by the working class (i.e., in effect, the Communist) leadership only. He was so fanatic in his newly found creed that he resorted to great exaggerations in stating that already 90 per cent

of the Indian masses had become proletarians (or semi-proletarians) ![3] This about a country which was then dominated by Zamindari or small peasant modes of production !!

Fortunately, the incisive intelligence and unrivalled experience of Lenin had a very sobering effect on this 'new convert' and he allowed for considerable number of amendments to be made in his thesis. Lenin's thesis was also modified, but in one respect only, i.e., in directing the communist parties, if existent, of colonial and semi-colonial countries, to maintain their separate identity even while uniting with the bourgeois and other classes for the cause of national liberation. Also, the Comintern was supposed to aid the national liberation movements in such countries through the medium of the indigenous Communist parties only. However, Lenin's thesis in the main was very encouraging and helpful to the national liberation movements and recognized the reality that in colonial and semi-colonial countries the indigenous bourgeoisie had not already lost but still possessed, to a greater or lesser extent as the case may be, a revolutionary content and a revolutionary role to play. It is quite unfortunate that it was not Lenin's main thesis but Roy's supplementary thesis (that too the unamended version !) that had currency among the Indian communists for a long time in their nascent stage. This had tragic consequences for the Indian Communist movement which was a victim of its own sectarian policies under the influence of Roy's thesis. Just when Roy was generally veering round to Lenin's views and entreating the Indian Communists to whole-heartedly participate in the national movement, another about-turn came in the policies of the Comintern itself. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern under Stalin adopted an extraordinarily left-sectarian line (1928), recommended the Royist thesis on colonial and semi-colonial countries *In toto,* and directed the Communist parties in such countries to unequivocally dissociate themselves from the national struggles led by the 'counter-revolutionary' bourgeoisie ! However, let us again come back to the period of the II Congress. Curiously, after his ultra-revolutionary thesis at the II Congress, the first thing Roy did in relation to the national struggle in India was to advise the Bolsheviks to raise and train a 'revolutionary'

army from the *muhajirs* who trecked their way into the Soviet Union, and send the army via Afghanistan with which the Soviet government had friendly relations, to the North-West frontiers of India for a concerted attack from there on the British positions A substantial area could be liberated and in this liberated zone communist measures of economy and administration were to be implemented to serve as an example and inspiration to the rest of India. From this zone, the liberated territory could be expanded step by stop by complimenting the armed struggle at the frontiers with the militant mass struggles in the mainland.[4] So, after all these years, Roy was only trying to implement an old policy (i.e., what was called the North-Western Frontier scheme or the Afghan scheme by the Sedition Committee), but with a new support and orientation; So it was still a mere conceptual jump from the Batavia scheme which sent him abroad, to the Afghan scheme backed by the favourable Bolshevik winds. Much time had to elapse before Roy himself realized the futility of these old patterns of thinking and firmly set himself to the task of building an indigenous communist party from among the conscious political activists of the country itself.

Long before Roy, two teams of national revolutionaries trecked into Russia. One was that of Raja Mahendra Pratap and his provisional revolutionary government, and the other was that of the Indian Revolutionary party of Abdul Rabb and M.P. Thirumala Acharya. The latter followed in the stride of the *mujahids* who left India to fight for Turkey against Britain and pre-dated the *muhajirs* by three to four years. M. P. T. Achatya was, of course, not a *mujahid* but entered Russia along with a band of *mujahids*. Abdul Rabb could never reconcile his Islamic faith with the atheist professions of the Bolsheviks and never became a communist. But M. P.T. Acharya, who was said to be an anarchist, in course of time became a communist.

Roy's Tashkent School tried to give military and political training and education to a number of *muhajirs* who left India at the call of the Khilafat Committee in the year 1920 on the issue of Khilafat, and who among many more *muhajirs* could succeed in entering Soviet Russia with a view to fight against the British government, on the side of Kamal Pasha of Angora

(Turkey) with whom the Soviet government had good relations at that time. But to his dismay, Roy found that a large number of *muhajirs* could not rid themselves of Islamic obscurantism, and only a few of them showed any interest towards Communism. [5]

From the (ex-)representatives of some of the above mentioned trends of national (and Islamic) revolutionaries, the first Indian Communist group emerged in Tashkent and styled itself as the Indian Communist Party. The formation of this Party was officially announced at a meeting of the Indian communists convened by Roy on 17 October, 1920. It consisted of M. N. Roy, Evelyn Trent-Roy, Abani Mukherji, Roza Fitingof (wife of Abani), Mohammed Ali (Ahmed Hasan), Mohammed Shafiq Siddiqqi and M.P. Thirumala Acharya. Mohammed Shafiq was elected the Secretary. [6] While M. N. Roy and Abani Mukherji belonged to the Juganthar group of revolutionaries (being sent as emissaries abroad to secure arms and ammunition), M. P. T. Acharya was a South Indian revolutionary who had connections with the Savarkar group of London revolutionaries of the 'India House'. Mohammed Shafiq Siddiqqi and Mohammed Ali were said to have come to Russia long before the *muhajirs* as the representatives of the so-called Provisional Revolutionary Government of India in Kabul under Raja Mahendra Pratap. Most probably they belonged to the earlier *mujahids*. Some persons from the *muhajirs* were also admitted as members some months later. Hence, it is clear that the predominating influence as well as the early majority of the founder members was non-Muslim and was quite free of any sort of concealed religious bigotry. Also, all the founding members were great and sincere patriots who were really influenced by the October Socialist Revolution and realising the futility and folly of their earlier efforts and ideas, finally veered round to the ideology of Communism. It is nothing but a travesty of facts to infer that

> ... it is probable that, like many other Indians at the time, he [Roy] was drawn to the Communist International not because of ideological convictions but rather

> because it provided political and financial support for his struggle against imperialism in India. [7]

This is nothing but a sophisticated manner of repeating the British Intelligence Department's slanders that Roy and his associates were but the 'paid agents of Moscow.'

The Tashkent Military School was disbanded in April 1921, and the communist group in Tashkent as well as several sympathisers among the *muhajirs* were shifted to Moscow to be admitted in the just then established Communist University of the Toilers of the East. By October 1, 1921, there were eighteen Indians, mostly communists, studying at the University. [8]

A delegation of Indian revolutionaries from Berlin comprising of fourteen persons including Virendranath Chattopadhyaya (Chatto), Bhupendranath Dutta, Virendranathdas Gupta, Khankoje, Luhani, Nalini Gupta and the then wife of Chatto, Agnes Smedely, also visited Russia on the eve of the Third World Congress of the Comintern, early in May 1921. [9] They radically differed from M. N. Roy's ideas and organisational measures regarding the Indian Revolution. They thought any formation of the Indian Communist Party at the time to be premature. Contrary to Roy's integrated capitalist development theory, they emphasized the plural structure of the Indian economy. But they were intensely national and did not even trust the British proletariat which was thought of by them as a party to the imperialist exploitation. They claimed to be the sole representatives of the revolutionaries in India and demanded that they be treated as such. They asked for unconditional help for the cause of the national revolution (of course to be channelled through their medium only). They underestimated the strength of and domination by the Indian bourgeoisie, and ruled out of question any suggestion that a national revolution, if succeessful, might result in the ascendancy of the bourgeoisie and exploitation of the proletariat They presented a thesis (in a memorandum) to Lenin, who after patiently going through it, remarked that there was no need for a new thesis at that juncture. [10] Lenin probably suggested them that if his thesis on

the colonial and semi-colonial question was implemented, it would satisfy all the doubts and questions raised by the Indian revolutionaries.

The group of Indian revolutionaries that came from Berlin was quite hostile and unfriendly towards M.N. Roy One important reason for that was that Chatto and others were convinced that Abani Mukherji with whom M. N. Roy was quite friendly and who was a founder-member of the Communist Party of India at Tashkent, was indeed a British spy responsible for the conviction and execution of many revolutionaries. The other reasons were ideological, since they did not believe in any necessity for the formation of Communist Party and an independent working-class movement apart from the national revolution at that juncture. Also, M. N. Roy attributes this unfriendliness to 'the evil genius' of Agnes Smedely. [11]

Inspite of the concerted opposition of the Indian revolutionaries, Roy and his group won official recognition from the Comintern. But it is noteworthy that the Comintern maintained contacts with the Chatto group at Berlin too and helped them in spreading Bolshevik ideas. Roy's group sent Nalini Gupta, an ex-Anushilan revolutionary turned communist, to India in November, 1921. He stayed in India clandestinely upto March 1922, and in the meantime claimed to have organised a communist group in Bengal with Muzaffar Ahmad as his principal recruit. [12] Apart from Nalini Gupta, Roy arranged to send 17 of the 22 Indian graduates from the Communist University at Moscow, back to India through the Afghan route. But many of them were arrested by the British Indian police and a spate of Peshawar conspiracy cases (in all five) ensued and they were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment simply for their education at Moscow and their alleged complicity in a conspiracy to overthrow the British Indian government. The first four cases were disposed of by April, 1924, whereas the fifth was instituted and disposed of in 1927. [13]

Meanwhile, M.N Roy shifted his head-quarters to Berlin in early 1922 and from there began to regularly publish a communist newspaper 'The Vanguard of Indian Independence' from

May 15, 1922. [14] Thousands of copies of the 'Vanguard' were secretly smuggled into India, and also posted to hundreds of addresses in the country and it definitely created a good effect on the revolutionary nationalist circles. Even C.R. Das was contacted by M.N.Roy through Nalini Gupta, and it is curious to note that Deshabandhu C.R.Das began to talk about 'Swaraj for the 98 per cent of the masses' at the Gaya Congress in December, 1922, and afterwards.

But C. R. Das was at best only a revolutionary democrat and did not go the full hog with M.N.Roy On December 1, 1922, Roy also published in the 'Advance Guard' (changed name of the 'Vanguard' to circumvent customs prohibition) a 'Program for the Indian National Congress' in which he advocated complete national independence, called for a Constituent Assembly elected by the people, and establishment of a Federated Republic of India which would rest on the corner-stone of peasants and workers unity. The document was sent to India in large numbers and the 'Amrit Bazar Patrika', as usual, gave much favourable coverage to it. At the same time, another message from the IV Congress of the Communist International, which was in fact drafted by M.N. Roy, was sent to the Gaya Congress session. It openly advocated the necessity of a violent revolution to overthrow the British rule and stressed that workers and peasants were alone capable of carrying the revolution to victory. [15]

M.N. Roy seems to have had chiefly concentrated on the task of winning over national revolutionaries to the cause of communism. This is quite understandable given his own revolutionary background and also the historical fact that till the advent of Gandhi on the Indian scene it was these national revolutionaries alone who consistently fought for the cause of national independence. Roy's efforts did not bear much fruit in the sense that not many among the national revolutionaries became early converts to communism. But in the sense of exerting indelible ideological impressions, it certainly created a great impact The commitment of the Hindustan Republican Association to build 'a society free of exploitation of man by man' and follow 'the example of Bolshevik Russia in the

modern age', might be traced to the connections of Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee with Nalini Gupta and Abani Mukherji as also to the impact of a continuous stream of communist literature written and / or published by M.N. Roy from abroad and smuggled into India by various means.

Ironically, the early converts to communism in India appear to be persons with little or no connections with any of the national revolutionary organisations. Dange in Bombay, Singaravelu Chettiar in Madras, Ghulam Hussain in Lahore, Shaukat Usmani (Moscow-returned communist) in the United Provinces, and Muzaffar Ahmad in Bengal – all were non-revolutionaries, so to put it. It is also strange that Nalini Gupta who was deputed twice as an emissary to India by Roy, and Abani Mukherji who was sent by the 'Indian Independence Party' of Chatto and other revolutionaries at Berlin to propagate communism in India – both were alleged, not without some valid grounds, to have been British agents. It is still more interesting to note that Chatto and others who blamed M.N.Roy for harbouring a 'British spy', thought it wise in a couple of years after that to take into their fold the same 'spy' and send him as their representative to organize the communist movement in India! However, the real truth as to these allegations perhaps needs yet to be finally ascertained, but for the present the scales seem to be weighing on the side of these allegations only.

In the year 1923, both Abani Mukherji on behalf of the 'Indian Independence Party' and Nalini Gupta, the emissary of M. N. Roy for the second time, sneaked into India Abani Mukherji seems to have had successfully influenced Manilal (of Baroda but settled down at Fyzabad) in the drafting of his Manifesto and also impressed Singaravelu of Madras very much. The Manifesto of the Labour Kisan party inaugurated by Singaravelu at Madras on the May Day of 1923, also appears to have been greatly influenced, if not actually drafted, by Abani Mukherji [16] Curiously, this party 'reserved' the question of private property for the future and the Manifesto was an eclectic compendium of various principles and demands lifted from various Bolshevik declarations, and was conspicuous by

the absence of any reference to British imperialism or the need for its violent overthrow This same Singaravelu created a stir in the Gaya Congress by openly professing himself to be a communist and also by emphasising his faith in the non-violent non-co-operation methods of Mahatma Gandhi. [17] M. N Roy seems to have lost all faith (by the end of 1923) in the ability of this person to evolve into a mature and militant communist

Dange, Shripad Amrit., acquired the reputation of being the first (mainland) Indian writer to openly profess sympathies for Bolshevism in his pamphlet 'Gandhi versus Lenin', but it is curious to note that Dange stressed the relevance of Gandhian non-violence to Indian conditions and ruled out violent revolution. In August, 1922, he founded a weekly 'Socialist' which was later converted into a monthly and regularly propagated the ideas of communism (minus, of course, calls for a violent revolution). Muzaffar Ahmad, in contrast, seems to have been a consistent believer in the creed of communism including its call for the 'forcible overthrow of the existing order.' He, however, was almost completely separated from the nationalist current with which Singaravelu and Dange had good connections. Professor Ghulam Hussain, a resident of Lahore, was a down-right cheat who misused the money sent by Roy, for his personal profit and also made a full confession to the police which resulted in the withdrawal of the Kanpur conspiracy case warrants against him. He, however, ran a paper *Inquilab* from Lahore, and of necessity, propagated the concepts of communism to a certain extent. Shaukat Usmani returned from Moscow to India via Persia in September 1922 and worked in the United Provinces and Bengal to establish communist nuclei. After his return to India, he maintained regular correspondence with M.N. Roy upto the time of his arrest at Kanpur on 9 May, 1923. [18] He seems to have been an honest but not so capable communist.

A Bolshevik Conspiracy case was launched at Kanpur on 3 March, 1924, against eight accused before the District Magistrate of Kanpur under Section 121 A of the Indian Penal Code. M. N. Roy in Germany and R. C. L. Sharma in Pondicherry, were out of reach for the British police. Ghulam Hussain was

spared prosecution in appreciation of his *gulamgiri* (servitude) to the government. Singaravelu was not prosecuted on grounds of illness but the result of the trial was said to have given him the 'fright of his life.'[19] So the case was finally prosecuted against four persons only – Nalini Gupta, Muzaffar Ahmad, S. A. Dange and Shaukat Usmani, and all the four were sentenced to 4 years Rigorous imprisonment each by the Sessions Judge and the sentences were confirmed by the High Court. The line of prosecution was that all the accused owed their allegiance to a European organization known as Communist International, maintained regular contacts with it through M. N. Roy, and worked for a violent revolution to overthrow the British rule in India. The line of defence adopted by the accused was quite cowardly and they missed a golden opportunity to widely propagate the cause of communism from the dock. Roy seems to have remarked afterwards:

> Are these cowards who were afraid of four years' R. I. to be taken as revolutionaries? No use with fellows like these. We wanted steeled communists. If there were capable persons in the dock and in the court, Kanpur conspiracy case could have inaugurated a new chapter in the political history of India.[20]

One cannot but concur with Roy's sentiments keeping in view the enormous sacrifices made by hundreds of national revolutionaries who gladly embraced the gallows, courted life transportations, and withstood the most severe tortures in police custody and in jails for the sacred cause of their mother-land. After all, a communist is expected by anybody who is versed with the ABC's of that creed, to stand on a higher pedestal. But these 'communists' provided a very ludicrous picture by being afraid of even the (relatively) short term of four years R. I. It is on record in the National Archives of India that 'the most obedient' Dange had written letter after letter to the Government of British India to show mercy towards him and release him before the due date.[21] That Nalini Gupta acted as police informer is even admitted to by G. Adhikari. Muzaffar Ahmad too was reported to have given a statement (not amounting to a confession) to the police, confirming the already

revealed details.[22] Shaukat Usmani apparently did not do any serious work to spread the message of communism.

During the course of the Kanpur Conspiracy case trial, the Government's Counsel was reported to have stated that the organization of a Communist Party, in itself, was not a criminal offence but it was the advocacy of violent revolution to deprive the King-Emperor of his sovereignty of British India that was the real crime. Taking a cue from this, one Satyabhakta, a Kanpur journalist, took the initiative to establish a communist party (legally) first in Kanpur, and in due course to call for a conference of communists all over India for the establishment of a Communist Party of India. Satyabhakta first established the Indian Communist Party in Kanpur after giving an open declaration of his intentions to do so in the Hindi daily *Aaj* of 12 July, 1924 He claimed to have carried out independent work for one year by which time about 150 members joined it. Satyabhakta's conceptions about communism seem to be queer and his understanding of Marxism shallow. He did not call for complete national independence, and wanted to supersede or merge with his party all other political parties having relations with capitalists or the rich so that the toiling masses rallying under the banner of his party could march to the millennium. Sir Cesil Kaye reported to the Government of India thus :

> Satyabhakta and his associates are of no weight whatever and it is certain as anything can be that the 'Communist Party of India' will be nothing but a name.[23]

Satyabhakta claimed that Moulana Hasrat Mohani, Narayan Prasad Arora (M.L.C.), Radha Mohan Gokulji and various other prominent personalities joined his party. Even Jawaharlal Nehru was said to have joined his party ![24] Satyabhakta had contacts with the national revolutionary group, H.R.A., but publicly dissociated from it after a police raid in which the pamphlets 'Revolutionary' and 'Volunteer' of the H.R.A. were seized from his office. But Satyabhakta's moderation did not save him from further police harrassment and raids.

However at Satyabhakta's initiative (Dange claims to have initiated the same through his advice to comrades outside from the jail), a communist conference was held on 25 December, 1925, in a special pandal built near the Congress pandal in Kanpur. Petrie reported that about 500 delegates attended the conference. He also commented that, of them 90 per cent were of the labouring and cultivating classes and presumably understood little or nothing of the proceedings. [25] Hasrat Mohani was the chairman of the reception committee and Singaravelu Chettiar was elected President (at first Shapurji Saklatwala was considered, but due to his inability to attend, only his address was read at the conference). Hasrat Mohani in his usual Islamic way was uncritically placing Islam on a higher pedestal than communism in his speech. The presidential address of M. Singaravelu said to have been on a fairly high level but at the same time Adhikari informs us that it was treated rather contemptuously by M.N.Roy. The Labour Kisan party of Singaravelu was formally dissolved, and on 27 December, the constitution of the Communist Party of India and the declaration form for the membership of the party were discussed and adopted. The Indian Communist party of Satyabhakta was dissolved. [26] But Satyabhakta himself was not much pleased by the Conference and its resolutions.

> He apparently felt that its [CPI's] formation was the outcome mainly of his own energies, and he not unnaturally resented the attitude taken towards him at the Conference and his virtual supersession as the head of the organisation. [27]

Satyabhakta was taken only as a member of the Central Executive Committee, while the posts of secretaries went to S.V. Ghate and Janakiprasad Bagerhotta (who, in reality, was an agent of the Intelligence Department !). However, though Satyabhakta's Indian Communist party was declared to have been dissolved, in reality it seems Satyabhakta continued that organization but with the changed name of *Samyavadi Dal*. In this he had the support of the comrades from U.P. A cardinal problem on which Satyabhakta and others fiercely differed was as to whether the newly formed C.P.I. should have international

connections or not.[28] Satyabhakta was for a solely 'Indian' Communist party without any international affiliations and he went to the extent of calling M.N. Roy as a *hired agent* of the Comintern.[29] However, the overwhelming majority voted against Satyabhakta but it is curious to note that no actual decision to announce affiliation and appeal for recognition from the Comintern was taken !

However, the Communist Party of India on its own seems to have achieved no noteworthy results in organizational development. But the formation of the Workers and Peasants parties all over India and their struggles engulfing considerable sections of the toiling masses were chiefly due to the efforts of communists and to the advice of M. N. Roy from abroad. Around October 1926, Roy suggested that the Workers and Peasants parties be formed on quite a broad basis, drawing into their fold wide sections of the toiling masses. He changed his former opinions and advocated that there had to be a difference between the Communist Party and the Workers and Peasants Party (W.P.P.). The C.P.I. itself should be an illegal party or functioning so secretly as to go underground when situations necessitated such course But W.P.P. had to be an open and broad-based working class party. He also dropped his earlier plans for the formation of a people's party by which he meant a revolutionarynationalist party."[30] Around April 1927, W.P.P.s were actually being formed in various regions and Roy cautioned that they should be the rallying ground of all the exploited social elements and not merely a legal cover for the communist party.[31] By this time Philip Spratt was sent by the British Communist Party to work among Indian workers and peasants, and he assiduously pursued his task and secured significant results The mass upsurge of 1927-28, especially the great working class struggles of the period were in no less extent due to the efforts of these Workers and Peasants parties led by Communists like Spratt, P C. Joshi, Dharani Goswami, Gopen Chakravarty, Joglekar, etc. We have already seen how an All India workers and Peasans party conference was held at Calcutta in December 1925, co-terminous with the historic Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress; and how a mamoth working class

demonstration marched into the Congress pandal and truimphantly asserted their (workers') existence.

However, the Communist Party as well as the W. P. P.s from the beginning held a perverse view of the national movement and the Congress leadership. Though they rightly denounced the 'moderate' views of the Congress leaders and their bias towards upper classes, they failed to realize that unless they set an example of whole-hearted and dedicated struggle and service, they would not be able to win the masses and rise to be the leaders of the national movement. They always thought in terms of 'capturing' the organization (as if it were a bastion of the enemies!) but never of whole-heartedly co-operating to the extent possjble. In their eagerness to capture power (in the organization), they called the Congress leaders all possible names, especially from 1928–29, when the Comintern line itself changed. If the communists still commanded a certain amount of popularity and support from the working classes, it was due to their untiring efforts trom the platform of W.P.P s to rouse the toiling masses on day to day issues; but so far as the achieving of the main political task of complete political independence and leadership of the national movement was concerned, they miserably failed. Even the Kirthi Kisan party of Punjab, though not a strictly communist organization and which had numerous links with the Ghadar revolutionaries (who were veering round to the marxian point of view from 1922), was not immune to this disease. Otherwise, it could have, with the help of Naujawan Bharat Sabha, emerged as the main national organization of Punjab.

But even the experiment of working through the W.P.P.s which led to considerable initial successes, was given up when the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928, under the guidance of Stalin adopted a totally left-sectarian line. The Comintern, under Stalin's guidance, denounced all social-democrats as socialfascists, and also the national movements in countries like India as led by the 'counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie'. The C.P.I. had to toe the line of the world organization but even other-wise it is doubtful whether the self-centered and malice-

ridden leaders of the communist party could have adopted a correct line *vis-a-vis* the national movement. Finally, in December, 1930, the Communist party set upon itself the chief task of 'the building of a centralised, disciplined, united mass underground Communist party', and officially bade good-bye to the Workers and Peasants parties.[32] But the actual undermining of the W.P.P.s started a bit earlier, in 1929 itself.

However, the Communists during 1926-28, achieved a lot more than their predecessors could prior to the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case. The W.P.P.s' organs such as the *Kranti* (Marathi from Bombay) *Ganavani* (Bengali from Calcutta), and *Mehnatkash* (Urdu from Punjab), greatly helped the propagation of communist ideas among the people and so did the magazine *Kirthi* (Punjabi from Amritsar) of the Kirthi Kisan party in Punjab. The great working class strikes of 1927–28, and the active role of the communists in leadership as well as cadre work during the strikes, unnerved the British Indian Government which thought it necessary to launch yet another—this time a bigger—conspiracy case to bring to book all the active communists and incapacitate them by prolonged incarceration. A Public Safety Bill was also sought to be passed to prevent the advent of dangerous foreign communists like Spratt and Bradley; and a Trade Disputes Bill was actually passed prohibiting the working class from resorting to a general strike. We had already gone through the details of these two bills in Chapter VII of this book in connection with the Assembly bomb case.

On March 20, 1929, the British Government of India conducted large-scale arrests, searches and raids at different places all over the country and arrested 31 persons. Of them, the following eight were members of the All India Congress Committee: Dr. Viswanath Mukherji, D.J. Thengdi, Kedarnath Saigal, Sohan Singh Josh, K. N. Joglekar, R. S. Nimbkar, S. A. Dange, and Muzaffar Ahmad. Others were Kishorilal, Gopal Basak, Gopendra Chakravarthy, Dharani Goswami, Shibnath Banerjee, Ajodhya Prasad, Shamsul Huda, and Radha Raman Mitra from Bengal; S.V. Ghate, A.V. Jhabwala, S.S. Mirajkar, G.M. Adhikari, Shaukat Usmani, M.G. Desai, A.A.Alve, and G.R.Kasle from the Bombay presidency; Puran Chand Joshi, Gauri Shankar, Dharm

Vir Singh, L.R.Kadam from U.P., and Abdul Majid from Punjab. Europeans (Englishmen), Philip Spratt and B.F. Bradley, were also arrested. They were all arrested under section 121A of the Indian Penal Code and the charge was one of conspiracy to deprive the King of the sovereignty of British India. Under this section an overt act is not necessary and even an intention is punishable. The maximum punishment was transportation for life. Twenty three of the 31 accused came from the presidencies of Bengal and Bombay. In the ordinary course they would be tried in Calcutta or Bombay where a Jury trial could be demanded and many other facilities could be obtained by the accused. But the trial was fixed at Meerut, which was an out of the way place in U.P. where Jury trial could not be asked for by any except the two European accused. [33] Another European, Hutchinson, was arrested a few weeks later and his name added to the list of the accused.

Hundreds of house-searches were carried out by the police all over India and many cart-loads of books and papers – special directions were issued to obain books containing Southey's poems !– were taken away by the police. [34]

The trial commenced on 12 June, before Mr. Milner White, Special Magistrate. The prosecution was represented by Mr. Langford James and the defence by Mr. K.F.Nariman and others. Mr.James in his marathon indictment of over 17 hours spreading over the 12th, 24th, and 25th dates of June, 1929, chiefly concentrated on the following points:

1. The accused were all convinced communists and members of a party which was a branch of the Comintern, whose head-quarters was at Moscow.

2. In pursuance of the general plan of the Communist International to propagate and work for Bolshevist revolutions all over the world, the accused also did many things to unsettle the sovereignty of the King-Emperor in India. But it would be a mistake to call them 'nationalists'. They are in fact 'anti-nationalists' and designated the Indian Nationalist Congress as a misguided bourgeois party. Gandhi was called a grotesque reactionary, Lajpat Rai a scoundrel, and C.R. Das a poltroon, etc.

Even Jawaharlal Nehru was called a tepid reformist and Subhas Bose a bourgeois and a ludicrous careerist.

3. They worked chiefly among the working classes and through the Workers and Peasants parties They organized huge strikes at various places paralysing production and administration. They captured several Unions in key industries, over the labor unions of the munitions factory at Itchakey and the arsenal at Kirkee. In pursuance of a precisely definite plan in Bombay, they conducted a prolonged general strike in the textile industry – 80 out of 84 mills struck work from April 1928 to October 1928. They captured the key Railway unions in India.

4 Philip Spratt who came to India in the guise of a 'humble book-seller' and Bradley as a gentleman travelling for patent underground tiles, were, in fact, Comintern agents sent by the British Communist Party to guide and help the Indian Communists in organising the workers and peasants' struggles, and were corresponding secretly and openly with various persons in and out of India for the said purpose. Spratt was particularly active and toured Bengal and Punjab in addition to Bombay, and instigated many strikes.

5 The intention of these accused persons was to bring about a general strike on an extensive scale on May 1, 1929. This was their immediate objective and it was upon this job that they were engaged when they were arrested.

6. The question was not whether the accused were members of the Communist Party but it was whether they had entered into a conspiracy to deprive His Majesty of His sovereignty by class war and revolution. The orthodoxy or ideology of Bolshevism did not matter, but what mattered was that the accused had imbibed Bolshevist plans and were putting them into action for a purpose which constituted an offence.

7. The famous 'Assembly letter' (so called because it was placed on the table of the Central Legislative Assembly by the then Home Member, Crerar) of M. N. Roy to Muzaffar Ahmad, unequivocally urged the communists of India to start

an open and determined fight for the overthrow of imperialism ; and following this letter, the accused held a meeting at Calcutta and they definitely entered into a form of an organized Communist Party of India which was pledged to the creed and objective of the Third International.

8 Hence, the accused deserved to be convicted under section 121 A of I. P. C. [35]

The lower court, which completed its hearing of the case on 14 January, 1930, concurred with the prosecution charges, and concluding that the accused had formed part of the conspiracy to deprive the King-Emperor of His sovereignty of British India, held them liable to be tried under section 121 A of I. P. C., and committed them to the Sessions Court. The Sessions trial dragged on for a long period of 3 years and on 16 January, 1933, the Additional Sessions Judge sentenced all but four of the thirty one accused persons to varying terms of transportation and rigorous imprisonment. D. R. Thengdi who was on bail died during the period of trial, and three Bengalis were acquitted Muzaffar Ahmad was sentenced to transportation for life. S. A Dange, S.V. Ghate, K.N. Joglekar, R S. Nimbkar and Philip Spratt for 12 years transportation ; Abdul Majid, Sohan Singh Josh, and P. C Joshi to five years transportation ; while Gopen Chakravarthy, Gopal Basak, Lester Hutchinson were sentenced to undergo rigorous imprisonment for a period of four years, and Shamsul Huda for three years. Amir Haider Khan, an absconder, managed to evade arrest till 1932, but was not tried in any supplementary case However, he was sentenced to thirty months imprisonment in another case in Madras. [36] All twenty seven convicts duly appealed to the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad. The Chief Justice who delivered the judgement on 3 August, 1933, appreciated the alertness and strict vigilance of the police in discovering the conspiracy at an early stage and nipping it in the bud, congratulated the C.I.D. which, inspite of every attempt made by the accused to conceal their designs and to cover up their communication and correspondence, 'managed to find out *practically every thing that the accused did or that passed between them*', found the accused guilty of a conspiracy of which serious view had to be taken, but yet in consideration of the fact that

all the accused had already undergone more than four years confinement before their case came before him, considerably reduced the sentences passed in the Sessions Court. The result of the appeal was the immediate release of Hutchinson and eight other lesser 'conspirators' who were acquitted, and also of P. C. Joshi, Gopal Basak, Shamsul Huda and Dr. G. M. Adhikari whose sentences were reduced to the terms already undergone. Spratt was enlarged in September, 1933, and the three 'incorrigibles' (Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad and Shaukat Usmani of the Kanpur Bolshevik conspiracy case fame) were to be released in 1935. With that the curtain was said to have been rung down on the second Act of the 'Indian Communist Drama.' [37]

Meanwhile, the 'new renegade' of the Communist International, expelled from that organization for his connivance with the Brandler clique in Germany, M.N.Roy, was greatly alarmed at the new shift in the Comintern policy which led to the virtual separation of the Indian communists from the national mainstream. With all his differences, Roy was still a convinced communist, though not of a Stalinist variety, and was still writing (allowed by the generous Bukharin) in *Inpreccor*, essays exhorting Indian communists not to isolate themselves from the national struggle. He was strongly opposed to the liquidation of the W.P.P.s. However, his efforts were to no avail and he decided to come back to India taking a grave risk He clandestinely reached Bombay on 17 December, 1930, and immediately set himself to organizational work – of course, in opposition to the then Comintern policies.

Here a few words need also be said about the revival of the Hindustan Ghadar Party in America and the formation of the Kirthi Kisan Sabha under the combined impact of the revived Ghadar party and the Comintern. Sometime in 1926, Hardayal, the Founder-Secretary of the Ghadar party, washed his hands off from the movement and began to sing praises of the 'relative good' of British imperialism. After Hardayal's exit from America, Bhai Santhokh Singh was made the General Secretary of the Ghadar party and member of the Commission of Three along with Baba Sohan Singh, President, and Kanshiram, trea-

surer.[38] However, the unscrupulous behaviour of Ram Chandra, the all-powerful Editor of the *Hindusthani Ghadar*, resulted in an unseemly clash within the Ghadar Party which was split into two acrimonious groups The murder of Ram Chandra on April 23, 1918, by Ram Singh, inside the San Francisco Court settled the matters for the time in favour of the incumbent General Secretary. Ram Singh who was fatally shot at the same time by Marshal Holohan, was said to have only carried out a collective decision of the men who had forced Ram Chandra to quit the Ghadar party and had taken charge of the organization (i.e., Bhai Santhokh Singh and others).[39] This Santhokh Singh with his chief lieutenant Rattan Singh was veering towards the marxian point of view by 1920 itself. In November, 1920, he started publishing the *Independent Hindustan* from America which, however, had to be discontinued by the end of 1921, owing to some internal squabbles.[40] Another organisation – 'Friends of Freedom for India' seems to have developed as a parallel and broad-based national organization with aims and objects to that of the Ghadar party, and it owed its origin in fact to the concerted campaign against the proposed deportation of the Ghadar leaders from America, in the immediate post war period On 5 December, 1920, the First National Convention of this organization was held at New York. One of the most important decisions of the Conference seems to be the appointment, for the first time in history of a Commission of five Americans to investigate the charges of British atrocities in India. Sailendranath Ghosh and Surendranath Karr, seem to have been the moving spirits behind this Convention which the illustrious Amir Haider Khan and many other prominent Ghadarites also attended.[41]

A most important development of the period was the attendance of Santhokh Singh and Rattan Singh at the IV Congress of the Communist International which met in Moscow in November 1922 Of these two representatives of the Ghadar party, Santhokh Singh attended as 'a delegate from India'[42] They also attended the II Congress of the Red International of Labour Unions (R. I. L. U.), in which Santhokh Singh delivered a speech on the possibilities of risings in India. After that both of them left for India in 1923.[43] Whereas Santhokh Singh was arrested on the North-West Frontier under

the name of Gurdit Singh, but was eventually released on security for lack of any specific charges; Rattan Singh managed again to sneak out to America.[44]

The revived Ghadar party abroad as well as its ardent leaders like Santhokh Singh and other supporters in Punjab, whole-heartedly applauded the Babbar Akali movement though somewhat belatedly. They do not seem to have instigated or aided the movement in the beginning though they were instrumental in the formation of the *Desh Bhagat Qaidi Parwar Sahayak Committee* in Punjab, and more so of its branch at Kabul. They collected a lot of funds in America and Canada to regularly help the families of the Babbar Akali martyrs. The Ghadar party abroad also helped two journals, *Desh Sevak* and *Kirthi* of Punjab, in a big way. The latter played an especially prominent role in the Punjab revolutionary politics It was wholly due to the untiring efforts of Santhokh Singh that the first issue of *Kirthi* appeared in February, 1926.[45] It was announced that the journal would be the voice of the Indian workers living in America and would sympathise with the workers of the world, and work for the weak and oppressed nations like India.[46] Though, no doubt, greatly influenced by the Bolshevik revolution and the Comintern, the paper struck a somewhat independent chord from the beginning when Santhokh Singh declared in the first issue that

> ... the organization of the Indian Communist Party [referring to the Kanpur Communist Conference and the formation of the Communist Party of India there in December, 1925] is purely Indian in origin. ... its work will be limited to India alone. *Our relationship with like-minked parties and the Third International is only that of sympathy and proximity of mind. Indian Communists are fellow-travellers and are in no way under them.*[47]

This *Kirthi* acted as the collective organiser and propagator for the famous Kirthi Kisan Sabha of Punjab, which was the neo-Ghadarite version of the Workers and Peasants' Party. We have also seen that the leadership of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha also passed into the hands of the stalwarts ot this Kirthi

Kisan Sabha (Kedarnath Sehgal and Sohan Singh Josh) in the First Provincial Conference of that Sabha held at Amritsar in 1928. This Kirthi Kisan Party also shared its part of left-sectarianism along with other communist organizations of the day and was ultimately dissolved in 1930 along with the other Workers and Peasants' parties. But it should be admitted that in contrast to other W.P.P.s, this Kirthi Kisan Party was able to mobilize a number of sincere and militant nationalists under its banner. By 1930–31, the Hindusthan Ghadar Party in America also petered out after its president Nidhan Singh was arrested in June, 1931, fot having communist affiliations; but of course the demise of the party was not solely due to that reason [48] It should also be pointed out here, that the Ghadar Party in America, at a time when Rattan Singh was not present in that country, lent its monetary and man-power support to a hare-brained scheme of Raja Mahendra Pratap who with the 11,000 dollars and seven volunteers given by the Ghadar party, embarked on a marathon trip to Tibet via Moscow, Japan, and China, with a view to instigate a rebellion in India from the Tibetan frontiers! Of course, he was spared all that 'trouble' by the polite refusal of the Dalai Lama of Tibet who denied entry into Lhasa of the Indian Mission led by the Raja, and the King had to return to America via Japan and Afghanistan ! [49]

Now to come back to the Communist movement proper, the Meerut trial and the consequent large scale arrests of the leaders of the C. P. I., meant a great blow to the Communist movement. However, the Meerut accused in contrast to the previous Kanpur accused, did succeed to an extent in using the courts as platforms of revolutionary propaganda, the Jails as schools of political education, and this to some extent counter-balanced the enormous losses But the failure was obvious and unmistakable. Two other developments – the dissolution of the Workers and Peasants' parties and the obstinacy of the Communists in opposing the Civil Disobedience movement led by Gandhi, added further to their losses and these losses of the Communists owing allegiance to the Comintern, in their turn, proved to be of certain advantage to M.N Roy. With his great intellectual capabilities and meticulous organizational work, Roy could create a great impact on the leftist politics, and the

Royists managed to capture and rejuvenate, one by one, the various trade unions in Bombay destroyed due to the ultra-left tactics pursued by the Communists during 1928-30. Practically all the unions over which the Communist Party had previously held control, were said to have passed into the hands of the Roy group.[50] Roy was said, at the invitation of Jawaharlal Nehru, to have had attended the Karachi session of the Indian National Congress and his influence was suspected behind Nehru's proposal of the Fundamental Rights and Economic Programme resolution in that Congress session (which was passed).[51] Williamson commented that it was of no small importance that the 'Declaration of Fundamental Rights' of which the Karachi Congress approved at Nehru's instance, was in some respects the same as the minimum programme which Roy had advocated in Bombay a few weeks before that.[52] However, shortly after his group registered a victory by capturing the All India Trade Union Congress in July, 1931, and thereafter issued an appeal for unity welcoming the minority group which split in the past due to the ultra-left actions of the Communists, Roy was arrested by the Bombay Police. He was prosecuted in the original Kanpur Communist conspiracy case and sentenced by the Sessions Judge on 9 January, 1932, to twelve years transportation which, on appeal, was reduced to six years rigorous imprisonment.[53] The other associates of Roy seem to have not possessed enough organizational talents or revolutionary zeal and perseverance, and with the arrest and conviction of Roy, the 'stars' of the Royist group began to rapidly fall. By the end of 1932, the Royist group virtually fizzled out.

The absconder in the Meerut Conspiracy case, Amir Haider Khan, first evaded arrest by going abroad and after about two years stay abroad, surreptitiously returned to India in the guise of a seaman at the end of March 1931, and settled down in Madras There he influenced some Press workers like Raja Vadivelu and also students like (Late) Sri Kambampati Satyanarayana, and gradually established himself as a communist leader of importance. Slow but sure he was, and within a year of his arrival he organized three communist cells in important mills, founded a local branch of the Young Workers'

League, established contacts with the communists in Bombay, and was making preparations to hold an All India Convention (perhaps of the then existing communists all over India) when he was arrested on 7 May, 1932, and sentenced to 30 months imprisonment. He served his term by the autumn of 1934, but having again quickly and energetically resumed his old connections and Party work, was imprisoned again – this time as a State Prisoner.[54] The nascent Communist movement in Andhra and Tamilnadu owed much to the great talents and feverish organizational work of this communist revolutionary.

Many of the Meerut Communist prisoners were released by he High Court Judgement and they immediately set themselves to the task of reorganizing the Communist Party and the working class movement. In 1934, they again successfully organized working class strikes in Bombay and U.P., though the Calcutta communists were said to have remained aloof this time. A provisional central committee was formed in November, 1933, and it was decided to organize an All India Convention soon after. A definite rethinking about the sectarian line of the sixth Congress of the Comintern was going on in the inner circles of the international communist movement consequent upon the rising threat of fascism in the European countries. In December, 1933, a conference was held in Calcutta and a new statute of the Communist Party of India was adopted. A Central Committee with G M. Adhikari as the General Secretary was formed, and the C P.I. soon after became a section of the Third Communist International. All was set for the launching of another phase of intense communist agitations all over the country, when the Government of India again dealt a swift and strong blow by formally declaring the Party illegal under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908.[55] The chief reasons adduced to by the Government were that it had been held, judicially, by the Allahabad High Court in the Meerut Conspiracy case appeal, that the Communist Party of India aimed at the violent overthrow of the persent order of society and bringing about the independence of India by an armed revolution. To this end, the C.P.I. adopted the tactics of mass action, strikes, demonstrations, etc. They were to culminate in a general strike and an armed insurrection The Government

had evidence to show that attempts were being made by the Communists in various parts of India to bring this programme (the Draft platform of action which first appeared in December, 1930, in the 'International Press Correspondence' and which exhorted communists to combine legal, semi-legal and illegal activities, to secure leadership over peasants, workers and students, and initiate a process of intense class struggles for the ultimate armed revolution) into effect. They were also attempting to inculcate revolutionary and communist ideas into the peasants, especially in the Punjab, and were starting the Young Workers' Leagues. In view of these facts, the Government recognised the necessity of taking action not only against the C P I., but also against the subsidiary organizations which were working in support of its programme and adopting the methods which it had suggested. Consequently, on 23 July, 1934, the Government of India declared the Communist Party of India, its committees, sub-committees and branches, to be unlawful associations under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908. Following this measure of the Central Government, the Punjab government declared unlawful, five associations including the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Kirthi Kisan party and the Anti-Imperialist League, on September 10, 1934; the Government of Bombay took similar action on five associations on November 8, 1934. The Madras Government on 20 November, 1934, declared unlawful the Young Workers' League which was organized by the Communists and which aimed at the overthrow of British imperialism. Finally, the Government of Bengal declared 13 associations which were under the control of the local communist agitators as unlawful, towards the end of 1934. All this was done to counter the 'constant revolutionary menace' constituted by the Communists.[56]

In the end, a few words about the achievements or non-achievements of the communists during the period 1921-1934. Indian Communism was from its infancy beset by disorders, perhaps not unnatural for any party in its infancy, but the tragedy is that the disorders were so profound and genetic that the Indian Communists could not overcome them even during its adolescence or youth. The immaturity natural in childhood or adolescence persisted throughout in the later phases also. The group rivalries of the national revolutionary organizations per-

colated down into the Communist circles also and perhaps with more pronounced character. There was an additional disadvantage for the communists here; whereas the national revolutionaries had the prestige of being uncompromising fighters for national freedom, the Communists, time and again and by their own doings, lost this opportunity. They, most of the time, ran counter to the mainstream of the national struggle and at times when they were willing to go with it, adopted foolish tactics which 'exposed' them before their 'enemies in leadership' or simply tailed the reformist Congress leadership without much foresight or criticism. In a word, they could never gauge the 'pulse of the people' correctly, and this proved detrimental to them inspite of their generally very dedicated, sincere and patient work, among the toiling masses. The leaders of the Communist movement were almost all from petti-bourgeois intelligentsia, which in itself should not have been a great defect since in colonial and semi-colonial or backward countries, middle classes are bound to be the fore-runners of any progressive movement. But this coupled with their distorted understanding of the international and more especially the national conditions, their line of uncritical allegiance to the Comintern, which not infrequently acted in pursuance of the Russian interests than of the interests of World Revolution in general, was responsible for their debacles. Their dogmatic understanding and stereotyped practice of an otherwise live, vibrant and scientific therory of Marxism, spelt disaster to them from time to time. Petrie, that very intelligent and perceptive author of the Intelligence Report, *Communism in India : 1924-1927*, gives the following reasons for the failure of the Indian Communists in the first phase (i. e., upto 1924) : 1. The chief cause of Roy's failure in founding a live communist party in India was due to the special circumstances prevailing in those times. Roy, as a John the Baptist of communism, endeavoured to introduce into India, the idea and practice of mass action, but before he started to do it, 'a greater than John the Baptist', i.e , Mahatma Gandhi forestalled him. The great Non-Co-operation movement with its universal appeal was more wide-spread and formidable than anything Roy could possibly have created even if he had a completely clear field, and this movement undoubtedly owed far more to

the peculiar talents and character of its founder (Gandhi) than to anything else. With a demi-god like Mr.Gandhi leading the non-co-operation movement, there was none to harken to the purely secular preachings of a 'puny earthling' like Roy. 2. Another important cause was said to be the 'indifferent' quality of Roy and his agents Practically all of them, including Roy, had proved to be greedy opportunists, lacking in scruples and principles and even in common honesty. 3. Another grave defect was that while every one was prepared to lead, few or none were prepared to follow. Nor any one of Roy's recuits, so far as would appear, possessed either the necessary influence, ability or 'drive' to make himself felt, or to lay any sort of foundation for a Bolshevik movement. 4 The general position of the recruits of Roy was well expressed in a sentence : "Let us remember that most people like to talk of revolution and direct action, but they have no desire to participate in it "[17] We can only say that there is considerable force in Petrie's arguments, and the second reason he cited, especially needs careful investigation and intense introspection among all the communists. The fourth reason he adduced to was more or less obvious in connection with the efforts of the communists upto or just after the Kanpur conspiracy case, but with the onset of the general working-class upswing of 1927-29, matters registered a marked improvement in this regard. Our final opinion in this regard is, as Mao put it, that 'Dogmatism is worse than cow dung' (which, however, is useful as manure) and that was the cause for 'right' or 'left' sectarianisms dominating the communist movnment in India ; and that was the cause why Roy, Muzaffar Ahmad, Dange, Sundaraiah, Rajeshwar Rao, (and more recently Charu Mazumdar, Chandra Pulla Reddy, T. Nagi Reddy, etc.) failed where Mao succeeded. This is in no way to neglect or understate the enormous importance of the peculiar material conditions in India (a well-developed and organized native bourgeoisie, a very powerful and influential urban middle class, ubiquitous and emaciated peasantry, and a relatively very weak, un-intelligent and not-so-uprooted proletariat, etc.). But it is only to emphasize the fact that despite all these obstacles, if the commnnists had a novel and creative programme of work and a flexible and broad-minded approach, and had they followed more the spirit of

Marx and Lenin than that of Stalin and other dogmatic leaders of the Comintern, they could definitely have gained an enormous mass following in this country, even if unable to seize political power. In this sense it was the lack of a real (not bookish) revolutionary theory and the consequent absence of a meaningful practice that has relegated the communists to the backyard of the Indian political arena.

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CHAPTER X

CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing chapters we have dealt with, in sufficient detail, the activities of the various revolutionary organizations and the accounts of the two armed rebellions in the South. We have also tried to find out the causes for their occurrence and assess the impact of the same on the national movement. Of course, we might not have been able to do sufficient justice in this regard because actually it takes volumes to speak about in a more or less comprehensive manner, about the above referred to topics. We particularly acknowledge that we failed in doing sufficient justice to the topic of Communism in India and could only allot a very brief space for the same. However, from what all has been written in the foregoing chapters, one glaring fact emerges for certain – that the above said movements created a tremendous impact on the minds and hearts of the people of those days and played a very considerable role in shaping the events of the national movement to gradually rise to a higher pitch of struggle and finally culminate in the winning of independence for India.

It is always a delicate task to assess the relative roles of various forms of struggle in any broad popular movement, and it is more especially so with regard to the assessment of the relative roles of the violent and non-violent forms of struggle in the fight for our country's freedom. Moreover, except for some rare instances, all phases of struggle involved little or much violence to a lesser or greater extent; and ironically the mass movements inspired by the thought of violent revolution were not always that violent. This is especially true with regard to the communist movement in this period (1921-34) which was by and large peaceful, and the major conspiracy cases against the communists were under section 121 A of I.P.C., which enabled them to be punished for the mere intentions

and propaganda of armed revolution. All the veteran revolutionaries and freedom fighters I interviewed were almost unanimous in stating that much benefit would not accrue by posing the problem in this manner, and the most reasonable answer would be that both violent and non-violent struggles formed an inalienable part of and exerted more or less equally significant impacts on the national movement.

Organization-wise, it is true that there was no equal to the Indian National Congress and the mass movements led by it under the charismatic leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. It is only after Mahatma Gandhi took the reins of the organization that it became a real mass organization, a broad platform for various dissenting classes, sections and groups to work for a common aim, and the branches of Congress were opened in every nook and corner of the country It is not true, as some over-zealous communists and fanatic 'revolutionaries' allege, that Mahatma Gandhi's image is being magnified out of proportion by the post-independent Congress governments for their own selfish ends and hence emerged his 'mahat' (greatness). It may be true that the Congress governments parrot the name and fame of Gandhiji for their own selfish ends, but to say that he was not 'mahan' (great) is baseless and ludicrous. On the contrary, it is really startling to find that Mahatma Gandhi achieved the unassailable position among the Congress leadership even before the epochal Non-Co-operation movement in 1920–22, by his call for Rowlatt Satyagrahas. So much so, that the mere mention by Gandhiji of his inability to continue in Congress in case his proposal that along with the condemnation of the Punjab massacres by governmental forces, the mob violence must also be condemned, was not acceptable to the Congress, caused so much consternation in the Congress ranks that the resolution of Gandhiji which was rejected by the Subjects Committee by an overwhelming majority had to be considered again and his feelings had to be respected. Even M.N.Roy did acknowledge as early an in 1923 that –

> Mahatma Gandhi was a great saint, a great sage, an incarnation of God Himself whom the white rulers could not harm, did not dare to touch, therefore, sim-

> ple ignorant men must trust, believe and blindly obey. The mass movement of riotous peasants, of striking city workers, fell into line with the nationalist movement ... Tremendous national *Hartals* paralysed for a day, two days, the national life and displayed the majestic strength of the Indian masses. ...The British government felt for the first time of its rule in India a challenge to its authority. [1]

Petrie could not point to anything since 1857 that had shaken the foundations of their rule so *rudely* as the Non-Co-operation movement under Mahatma Gandhi. [2] Likewise, in the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930–31, which was another great upheaval, Gandhiji was the undisputed 'dictator'. The 1942 Quit India movement, though in one sense repudiated by Gandhiji, did derive its inspiration and intensity from his majestic leadership only.

But then Gandhiji himself was changing. He did not or could not withdraw the Civil Disobedience movement suddenly in 1930–31, simply because the Chittagong Congress leadership (technically speaking) staged an armed uprising, and various other Congress leaders (again technically speaking) in various parts of the country took to violent activities which exceeded in breadth and depth any other terrorist acts upto that period. We had already noticed that his creed of non-violence itself was ridden with slef-contradictions and on more than one occassion he publicly declared that he would prefer the violence of the strong-willed to the cowardice and non-violence of the weak-hearted.

The revolutionaries themselves, perhaps with the exception of communists after 1928, seem to have realized this enormous significance of Mahatma Gandhi and his unassailable position as the leader of the nation. They violently differed with him when he obstinately stuck to his creed of non-violence and equally obstinately countered it with their advocacy of violent revolution. But they never, to my knowledge, stooped to the level of the communists (of the period 1928–34 and also later in 1948–52) in calling him 'an agent of the bourgeoisie'

(which was termed 'counter-revolutionary'), or of the present day 'marxist-leninist' revolutionaries in calling him names and characterizing him as a 'traitor'. The Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in its Manifesto distributed at the Lahore Congress in December 1929, expressly acknowledged thus :

> Mahatma Gandhi is great and we mean no disrespect to him if we express our emphatic disapproval of the methods advocated by him for our country's emanicipation. We would be ungrateful to him if we do not salute him for the immense awakening that has been brought about by his non-co-operation movement in the country. [3]

Even the bitterness of the hangings of Bhagat Singh and his comrades and the high emotions among the revolutionary youths who vented their anger by staging a black flag demonstration against Gandhiji were, strangely, not devoid of respect for him. Gandhiji himself wrote that they behaved most courteously and Sitaramayya narrated the incident thus :

> Young friends ... organised a black flag demonstration at the station, ..., 12 miles from Karachi. Gandhi with his good humour greeted the band of youngmen and gracefully received the black flowers from their hands. And the band who came to 'attack' remained to 'protect'. It escorted Gandhi and his party to a little distance from the station. [4]

Likewise it is very curious to note that Alluri Srirama Raju who led the heroic Rampa Fituri, after looting the Krishnadevipeta police station, gave the slogans of 'Gandhi ki Jai' along with other slogans and throughout his campaign took care to use the least possible violence. It is much more interesting to note that one of the slogans the Chittagong revolutionaries issued after looting the police armoury was "Gandhij's Raj has been established." [5] Then it is too well-known that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose promised the nation to deliver the power into the hands of Gandhiji if the I.N.A. succeeded in defeating

the British. In a message to Gandhiji, Subhas Bose beseeched him as follows :

> Father of our Nation ! In this holy war of India's liberation, we ask for your blessings and good wishes. [6]

We have already remarked that Gandhiji himself was changing, and especially after the civil disobedience movement of the 1930's was keenly perceiving the corruption, careerism and lack of honesty creeping into ascendancy in several of his followers. He found it almost impossible to recruit a dedicated cadre to the cause of the revolution (in his view non-violent one), and was a great admirer of the astounding self-sacrifice and heroism of the violent revolutionaries. Ananda Gupta, a participant in the famous Chittagong Uprising recounts thus :

> Even Mahatma Gandhi, despite his difference on the basic point of view with regard to non-violence took upon himself the responsibility of our release when we gave up the historical hunger strike in the Andamans at his earnest request.
>
> While making no secret of his devotion to non-violence he had this to say to us when he met us at the Alipore Central Jail after our repatriation from the Andamans. "I differ from you as south pole differs from the north pole, but if I had one dozen dedicated youths like you I could have changed the history of India long ago." Those historic words of Gandhiji are still ringing in my ears. [7]

I think after this any further comments on my part are superfluous.

But it is definitely true that attempts were, and are being, made to project 'more than life-size' images of other national leaders like Nehru, Patel, Jagjivan Ram, etc., and what is more deplorable, conscious attempts were and are being made, to completely neglect or dismiss with cursory note, the enormous contributions of militant and revolutionary nationalist leaders like Tilak, C.R.Das, Netaji Bose, etc., and especially those of

the revolutionaries like Surya Sen, Gopimohan Saha, Chandrasekhar Azad, Ramprasad Bismil, etc., though recently Bhagat Singh's image is again being raised to a high pedestal, primarily by the youth movements of the country. However, We have already noticed that official historians did and continue to do injustice to the role played by these revolutionaries in the Freedom Struggle.

What is not clearly projected is that these revolutionaries were not only examples of extreme self-sacrifice and unflinching dedication to the cause of the mother-land, but were (this is true at least about their leaders) in several instances, quite studious and a contemplative lot who had some sort of rational analysis of the country and a creative programme for the uplift of the downtrodden. Much before the Indian National Congress came forth with a clear-cut political, economic and social programme for the liberation of the masses, these revolutionaries tried to formulate such a programme, and were attracted towards the most progressive ideal of socialism influenced by the Great October Socialist revolution of Russia. Especially, the Hindustan Republican Association led by Sachin Sanyal, Jogesh Chatterji and Bismil, and its later variant the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association under Bhagat Singh, Azad, etc., seem to have had among other revolutionary organizations of the country, a better grasp of the realities of India and a clear vision of building a secular, socialist India after liberation. Under the influence of the October Revolution they committed themselves to the building of a system 'free of exploitation of man by man'. Bipan Chandra describes 'the new generation terrorist revolutionaries' (after 1925-26) as 'men of ideas and ideologies', and characterizes the programme of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army as 'a revolutionary programme with an advanced revolutionary socialist outlook...' [8] He also recognizes their shortcomings and comments that they never succeeded in 'taking off' politically. They got popularity as hero-figures devoid of distinct ideology and political personality but failed to get the support of the masses for their party. Their immediate objective was to spread revolutionary consciousness in the country by 'actions' (i.e., by 'propaganda by deed'). [9] In my opinion they perhaps succeeded in achieving this immediate

objective as evidenced by the electric effect and spread of the slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad' which in a very short time became a national (!) slogan. The generation of Congress activists after 1930's, not to speak of the revolutionaries, were more inspired by the self-sacrifices of these revolutionaries than by the peaceful programme of the Congress ; though many of them thought it safe and pragmatic to stick to the latter programme. But of course the revolutionary consciousness was very vague and one could better describe it merely as a 'recognition of the need of, and urge for, violent revolution'.

Unfortunately, the national revolutionary organizations in Bengal were not endowed with any high political consciousness comparable to that of the H S.R A , and strangely they were not so much impressed by the example of the Russian Revolution as that of the Irish one Almost all the leaders of the 'Revolt Group' which electrified the province of Bengal by their heroic deeds seem to have had kept the Irish Revolution as their model and almost avoided any discussion about the socio-economic system they would like to build up after independence. They concentrated on the one point formula – "Drive away the British." So much so that the date for the Chittagong Uprising was fixed on the Easter day in imitation of the Easter rising of the Sini Fein party, and as did the Irish rebels die fighting in that Rising in Dublin so were the Chittagong revolutionaries decided to fight to the last man. [10] We have already noted that the Barisal group of the Machuabazaar bomb case fame, issued a leaflet in which they took the Irish martyr Pearse as their ideal. In their uncompromising opposition to the British Imperialism these revolutionaries seem to have had even committed the sin of racial hatred. For example, the leader of the glorious Chittagong Uprising, Masterda Surya Sen, issued the following proclamation :

> The Indian Republican Army hereby directs and commands every man, woman and son of Chittagong to *capture and produce dead or alive forthwith* at the Head Quarters of the Army all English-men and white-skinned Anglo-Indians who are hostile to our national aspirations. [11]

The version given in the secret Government Peport is more abhorrable. According to it, the Indian Republ can Army declared the *lives* of all Englishmen and white-skinned Anglo-Indians who are prejudicial to the interest of Indian freedom, *forfeited to it* and exhorted the people of Chittagong to begin a *vigorous campaign of murdering these people wherever found to avenge the murders of their forefathers.* The I,R.A. further *declared ample rewards to any person who could produce any Englishman, woman or child of any age* to its headquarters, *dead or alive.* [12] This version seems to be more complete if we notice the later fact that it was Masterda who sent the first woman martyr of Bengal, Preethilatha Waddedar, with a squad to raid the Pahartali Railway Club and indiscriminately shoot at the Europeans or Anglo-Indians assembled there – be they men, women, or children. Why, even on the day of the Uprising an identical effort was made but ironically the fact of it being the Easter Day itself saved the lives of the Europeans since they were all celebrating the day in their own houses. Apart from pointing out that this action and this attitude of racial hatred was totally counter to the general run of and philosophy behind, the national movement which always avoided any manifestations of racial hatred, we would also remark that even among revolutionaries several people might not have approved this trend. For instance, it should be very difficult, nay impossible, to conceive of either Bhagat Singh or Azad issuing such commandments. It is quite strange that the national revolutionaries of Bengal who were the most deeprooted, wide-spread and terrific lot and who had more access to the most progressive and revolutionary ideas and literature, should have had, in reality, been politically on a lower plane than the H.S.R.A. revolutionaries of North India.

Orgaizationally, the national revolutionaries with the exceptions of the Chittagong group and the B. V. group, seem to have had not been endowed with any exemplary, and sometimes even with normal, talents for secret functioning. Further, all of them with the possible exception of H.S.R A., were followers of the 'Dada' (literally brother but here meaning supreme and unassailable leader) tradition. Democratic functioning seems to be conspicuous by its absence among the

revolutionary groups though it should be conceded that the H.S.R.A. was a little bit different in this respect from other organizations. Strangely those who were most influenced by Dan Breen's 'My fight for Irish Freedom' were first to miss the significant remark of his that the Irish Republican Army and the Volunteer Corps were democratic to the core, leaders were elected at every step and nobody was a 'respector of persons'. Perhaps this has to do much with the tradition of Guru worship in India and especially in Bengal which inculcated the belief that a Hindu could not hope to go to heaven without initiation by a *guru* and it was impossible to achieve *moksha* (salvation) without the Guru's expert advice [13] Almost all of the Bengali revolutionaries were Hindus and in the earier days (before 1919–20), they had to undergo some elaborate or formal initiation ceremonies and every one of them longed to court 'Veera Swarga' (heaven for the valiant martyrs)! However, it should be conceded that secular ideas were creeping in and broader visions were developing from 1920 onwards (in some cases even from 1907-08 onwards), but it is said 'habits die hard' and the relic of the 'Dada cult' seems to have had persisted for quite a long period. Even the initiation ceremonies seem to have persisted (if not with that purity or vigour as before) in some organizations It is quite interesting to note that in the terrorist group formed and led by Prathivadi Bhayankarachari (convicted in the Kakinada conspiracy case to 7 years R.I.), oath-taking and initiation ceremonies based on the worship of the Mother (Kalimatha) seem to have had taken place though that particular group was very much inspired by the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, etc., of H.S.R.A ! [14]

Contrary to Bipan Chandra's comments, the national revolutionaries were not a failure on the mass front. This is testified by their successful capture of the Congress organisations in Bengal and by the activities of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha in the Punjab which at its height was more popular than the Congress there. But the successes were, of course, not sufficient and they were again lost when terroistic activities flared up and ruthless repression ensued. Their chief defect was that they could not organise and conduct mass struggles but only used the mass contacts they had or the mass organi-

zations they led to further terroristic acts and to supply recruits for this purpose. The Chittagong revolutionaries decided to court martyrdom to a man on the seventh day[15] but they had no prior thoughts to organize the hill-people and the peasantry and conduct a prolonged guerrilla warfare. Moreover, the revolutionaries were by and large unsuccessful in impressing the people of Western and Southern India. If they took the course of mass movements they could have had, perhaps, impressed these regions also. And when they realized their chief defect, that automatically meant the end of the terrorist phase and onset of the preparations for a mass revolution through mass struggles. That is why we find terrorism coming to a final end in 1934–36, when the Juganthar group was officially dissolved and all the top leaders of that group merged into the Congress and many of the rank and file revolutionaries of that group as well as most of the activist revolutionaries of other groups, turned marxist Of the latter, a majority joined the Communist Party of India in 1938-39. My interviews with various revolutionaries and other enquiries revealed that not more than 40-45 per cent of the revolutionary activists of Bengal joined the Communist Party. Yet it is a very substantial figure and it is chiefly to the selfless and untiring efforts of these converts that the great development of the communist movement in Bengal should be attributed.

Another glaring failure of the revolutionaries needs to be mentioned. It was, as Gopal Haldar pointed out, their inability to enlist active Muslim support.

> It failed to resolve the religio-political conflicts of the Indian life and the Bengali life as a part of it, and to evoke the courage, patriotism and dynamism of our Muslim countrymen in the cause of freedom. That of course is the failure it shared with Indian nationalism as a whole, and it is a failure of which the roots lay deep in our past.[16]

Curiously, the Chittagong group seems to have had overcome this obstacle to some extent. Though they also could not recruit any activists from the community of Muslims, they did command admiration and respect and received shelters and

other indirect support from the Muslim masses of the Chittagong district. But even Kalpanadi in her article on this aspect could not reveal any active participation of Muslims in the revolutionary activities and only talks about the 'help and sympathy' of the Muslims.[17] A.C. Guha also says this much only when he remarks that Surya Sen could not have avoided arrest for about 4 years in a district where 80 percent of the population were Muslims, chiefly concentrated in the rural areas, but for the indirect aid given by them.[18] The communists, however, seem to have had a better success in this regard. While it is doubtful whether the national revolutionaries including the Chittagong group tried seriously to enlist anything but 'indirect aid' from the Muslims, the Communists tried their best to enlist the active participation of Muslims in their movement, and Bengal responded by throwing up many eminent Muslim communist leaders who greatly influenced the poorer sections of the Muslim masses Even in Punjab and the rest of India, Communists could draw in considerable number of poorer Muslims into their fold. But it should be admitted that their influence *vis-a-vis* the total muslim population was too little to bring about any material change in the attitude of that community towards the national movement.

Needless to say, the Communists were from the beginning a different set of revolutionaries with a higher ideological consciousness, unfortunately coupled with a quite low pragmatic thinking. Though they were the first to feel the need and give a call for a socialistic society to be established after independence, though they were the first to call for the mass struggles of the workers and peasants and to stress that the intensification of the class struggles should go side by side with the intensification of the national struggle for the overthrow of the British imperialism, unfortunately, they lacked in much practical wisdom, in the understanding of the Indian conditions and sometimes even the real zeal to translate their ideals into practice. They could not properly assess the influence of the tribal, family, caste and religious ties in the working of national politics, and it is startling to find that it was not the Communists but Gandhiji who declared a crusade on untouchability. This does not mean that the Communists

at any time countenanced untouchability, but that it did not strike them that this one great social evil with its great politico-economic repercussions should be attacked through a bold and consistent programme. Likewise, they bungled on the religious issues too. Either they were preaching atheism out of context or pandering to the religious inclinations of the masses, especially of the minorities, uncritically. Their single great contribution seems to have been manifest in the great awakening in the working classes during 1927–29, which owes much to their patient and dogged efforts through the medium of the Workers and Peasants' Parties There are no instances of their making any significant contributions to the national struggle; and strangely they were indifferent or opposed to the two great mass upheavals of this period – the 1921–22 Non-Co-operation movement and its immediate aftermath, and the 1930–34 Civil Disobedience movement The real development and contribution of the Communists belong to a later period – and the role of national revolutionaries-turned-communists is of cardinal importance in this connection.

Finally, we may remark that the chief contribution of the revolutionary organizations including the Communist Party was in the great awakening they produced in the masses by the great examples of heroism and undaunted fighting spirit they set, and the immense self-sacrifices they made They taught the people of the country by their practical deeds that the people could and should fight the oppressors with the sword also and that death was preferable to disgrace. As Gopal Haldar pointed out, they succeeded in evoking the spirit of 'minimum sacrifice by the many' by the 'maximum sacrifice of the chosen few', i.e., of themselves. [19] No doubt they registered many failures, but each failure was a stepping stone to ultimate success. We have already noted that even the peaceful movements of the Congress led by Gandhiji passed over many such stepping stones. The revolutionaries were the first to give a call for and also to actually plunge into, the battle for political independence, and they were also the first to recognize the necessity for the economic independence of the masses and opt for the ideology of Communism or Socialism under the impact of the Great October Socialist Revolution of Russia.

As such they played a very pioneering role in the general struggle for independence and a very considerable role in taking the mass struggles to a higher stage in the later period (1936–1947), which finally saw the vision of political independence (though not that of the establishment of a society 'free of exploitation of man by man') turning into reality.

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ERRATA

Page : line : word	*Wrongly printed as*	*To be corrected as*
5 : 1 : 3	it	if
44 : 19 : 2	in	on
69 : 34 : 1	at	of
112 : 15 : 3	freedom	freed
129 : 16 : 5	was	were
134 : 13 : 4	anti-Hindu,	anti-British, anti-Hindu,
183 : 9 : 7 (Sub-title)	ARMY	ASSOCIATION
217 : 1 : 6	of	and leaders of
325 : 12 : 2	he	the

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1

TAGORE'S LETTER

[The news of the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre so deeply stirred the heart of Gurudev Ravindranath Tagore that he at once addressed an anguished letter to the Viceroy renouncing his Knighthood. Here is the full text of that famous letter. – Courtesy, I. A. R., 1920.]

Your Excellency,

The enormity of the measures taken by the Government in the Punjab for quelling some local disturbances has with a rude shock revealed to our minds the helplessness of our position as British subjects in India. The disproportionate severity of the punishment inflicted upon the unfortunate people and the methods of carrying them out, we are convinced, are without parallel in the history of civilised Governments, barring some conspicuous exceptions, recent and remote, considering that such treatment has been meted out to a population disarmed and resourceless by a power which has the most terribly efficient organisation for the destruction of human lives.

We must strongly assert that it can claim no political expediency, far less moral justification. The accounts of the insults and the sufferings undergone by our brothers in the Punjab have trickled through the gagged silence reaching evey corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of our people has been ignored by our rulers, possibly congratulating themselves for imparting what they imagine salutary lessons.

This callousness has been praised by most of the Anglo-Indian papers which have in some cases gone to the brutal length of making fun of our sufferings without receiving the least check from the same authority relentlessly careful in smothering every cry of pain and expression of judgment from the organs representing the sufferers.

Knowing that our appeals have been in vain and that the passion of vengence is blinding the noble vision of statesmanship in our Government which could so easily afford to be magnanimous as befitting its physical strength and moral traditions, the very least that I can do for my country is to take all consequences upon myself in giving voice to the protest of the millions of my countrymen surprised into a dumb anguish of terror.

The time has come when badges of honour make our shame glaring in their incongruous context of humiliation and I for my part, wish to stand shorn of all special distinction by the side of those of my countrymen who, for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer a degradation not fit for human beings, and these are the reasons which have painfully compelled me to ask Your Excellency, with due deference and regret, to release me of my title of Knighthood which I had the honour to accept from His Majesty the King at the hands of your predecessor for whose nobleness of heart I still entertain great admiration.

Yours Faithfully,

Rabindranath Tagore.

APPENDIX 2

THE MOPLAH OUTBREAK

[This is the account of the Moplah rebellion given in I. A. R., 1922.]

On August 20th occurred the great Mopalh outbreak in Malabar. The Moplahs are a race of sturdy, independent-minded, supremely religious Mahomedans, said to be descendants of Arab traders and pirates who used to infest the Indian Ocean in early times, now inhabiting the hill and jungle tracts of Southern Malabar in the vicinity of Calicut. Their sturdy independence and stubborn resistance have made them ever a thorn by the side of the British and on many previous occasions they have broken out into riot.

The riot of the 20th August last gradually developed into an armed rebellion. For this Government laid the responsibility on the non-co-operators, while the latter laid the blame on Government. Assuredly, these inflammable people had heard of Gandhi's doctrine, had their own domestic and economic trouble, and had exaggerated accounts of desecration of the Hedaj. Government repressed their activities, prevented their leaders, especially Mr. Yakub Hussain, from approaching them, as Government never believed in the gospel of non-violence of the non-co-operators. The repression and its percussion kept the ground ready for explosion. And when the explosion occurred Govt. proceeded to the spot with troops and the triangle and declared Martial Law.

An official communique issued by the Madras Govt. stated that seditious speeches were made and seditious pamphlets circulated. More than that, bodies of so-called volunteers were formed, given a kind of uniform, and in some cases armed with swords. The Government admitted that it took no steps against the volunteers. It intended to proceed against the agitators, but before anything was done the outbreak took place. The signal for this outbreak was an attempt made by the authorities to set the law in motion

against some people alleged to be guilty of sedition. The facts in detail are as follows :—

About the middle of August agrarian trouble arose owing to the rich Zamindârs of Nilambur making new disposition of their land. The Moplah tenants of Pookootor suffered great hardships. Privileges enjoyed for generations are not easily given up, and the grant of *me.charth* by the sixth Thirumalpad of Nilambar naturally provoked the fanatic tenants. Riot broke out in Nilamber. The district authorities naturally sided with the rich landlords and the poor tenants had no relief. Their troubled state made them fit subject for religious fanaticism, further roused by false stories of the Khilafat agitation and about M. Gandhi's non-co-operation. But the authorities followed repression and did not allow Khilafat and N-C-O leaders to proceed to Malabar. Even the priests of the Moplahs were arrested, and mosques were surrounded by the military and police to arrest the priests. On the fateful day, the 20th August, 1921, the district Magistrate with a party of the Leinster Regiment arrived at Tiruvangadi, surrounded the mosque, and arrested three Moplah divines on the allegation of their having evicted the Moplahs.

News of this soon spread. A crowd of 3000 Moplahs came by train from Tanu to Prapanagadi and the regiment was at once sent to meet them. They were dispersed by fire. Another crowd had in the meanwhile collected at Tiruvangadi and demanded the priests back. They were met by Lewis gun and magazine fire. Here 2 British officers were murdered, and the mob then looted the Railway station, cut the line, uprooted the rail, burnt Railway buildings levelled the embankment and demolished a few Railway culverts. In a couple of days Ernad Taluk rose in a state of armed rebellion and cut itself off on all sides from British territory, and the Moplahs declared a Khilafat Kingdom. Within the next few days 10,000 Moplahs raided Tirur, and created havoc in the neighbourhood, setting fire to the Police station and the courts, plundering all arms and ammunition, and rooting up the rails. On the 21st the Nilambar palace was attacked; 13 people were slaughtered, the records of a century burnt,

the premises partly demolished and all furnitures broken. Regular looting, especially of treasuries and police stations, commenced in Nilambar, Manjeri, Malapuram, Tirur, Palghat and other places. Several Europeans were killed. European planters were driven out. Hindu houses and temples were desecrated, blakmail levied and there were wild reports of Hindus being forcibly converted into the Moslem faith. On the 25th the Ernad treasury was looted and a cash of some Rs 6,00,000 went into rebel hands. On the 26tn the "battle of Pookutur" was fought for five hours, the moplahs having placed themselves in trenches and armed with arms and ammunition looted by them previously. The engagement cost them 400 killed out of a mob some 1000 strong, while the British regiment sustained a few losses. Soon, however, British troops began to pour into Malabar and on August 26th Martial Law was declared. And by the end of the month the situation was well in hand. On September 1st, Ali Musaliyar, the rebel leader of the Moplahs, surrendered with 40 men, and next day Kuntikoya Thangal, another Moplah leader, was arrested. Gradually the rebellion was put down in all the large stations, but the majority of Moplahs fled to the hills and jungles of Malabar from which they came out for occasional raids and continued to conduct a guerilla warfare.

In the interior of Palghat and Mannarghat the rebels continued their reign of terror, with pillage and arson committed everywhere, especially in East Ernad, where Kunhahmad Haji declared himself an independent sovereign. At Alanallur, near Mannarghat, a serious skirmish occurred between the rebel gang and the British troops. A Moplah conference was held in which a *jehad* was declared, and Hindus who did not actively help them were reported to have been forcibly converted. The trouble raged on for months, the rebels raising their head again again, as soon as marching columns of British troops had gone by.

It is not yet possible to judge affairs of this period at Malabar at their proper value. As in the Punjab in 1919, things happened during the Martial Law period in Malabar which do no credit to the administration. One glaring

instance of cruelty of the administration to which history rarely affords a parallel and by the side of which all the alleged misdeeds of the Moplahs appear trivial leaked out in November 1921. This was the notorious Moplah train tragedy in which a 100 prisoners were put in a closed and air tight goods van and despatched by rail; when the door was opened 66 were found dead and the rest on the point of dying. How many such blood-curdling inhumanities lie buried in the dark chapter of Malabar history of this period, time alone will show.

APPENDIX 3

MALABAR'S AGONY

—Annie Besant

It would be well if Mr. Gandhi could be taken into Malabar to see with his own eyes the ghastly horrors which have been created by the preaching of himself and his "loved brothers." Muhammad and Shaukat Ali. The Khilafat Raj is establised there; on August 1, 1921, sharp to the date first announced by Mr. Gandhi for the beginning of Swaraj and the vanishing of British Rule, a Police Inspector was surrounded by Moplahs, revolting against that Rule. From that date onwards thousands of the forbidden war-knives were secretly made and hidden away, and on August 20, the rebellion broke out. Khilafat flags were hoisted on Police Stations and Government Offices. Strangely enough it was on August 25th, 825 A.D. that Cherman Perumal ascended the throne of Malabar, the first Zamorin, and from that day the Malayalam Era dated that is still in use; thus for 1096 years a Zamorin has ruled in Calicut, and the Rajas are mostly Chiefs who for long centuries have looked to a Zamorin as their feudatory Head. These are the men on whom the true pacification of Malabar must ultimately depend. The crowded refugees will only return to their devastated homes when they see those once more in safety in their ancestral places. Their lands, which they keep under their own control, are largely cultivated by Moplas, who are normally hardy, industrious agricultural labourers.

Our correspondent has sent accounts of the public functions connected with my hurried visit to Calicut and Palghat, and that which I wish to put on record here is the ghastly misery which prevails, the heart-breaking wretchedness which has been caused by the Mopla outbreak, directly due to the violent and unscrupulous attacks on the Government made by the Non-Co-operators and the Khilafatists and the statements scattered broadcast, predicting the speedy disappearance of British Rule. and the establishment of

Swaraj, as proclaimed by the N. C. O. and Khilafat Raj, as understood by the Moplas from the declarations of the Khilafatists. On that, there is no doubt whatever, so far as Malabar is concerned. The message of the Khilafats, of England as the enemy of Islam, of her coming downfall, and the triumph of the Muslims, had spread, to every Mopla home The harangues in the Mosques spread it everywhere, and Muslim hearts were glad. They saw the N. C. O. preachers appealing for help to their religious leaders, naturally identified the two. The Government was Satanic, and Eblis, to the good Muslim, is to be fought to the death. Mr. Gandhi may talk as he pleases about N C O.s accepting no responsibility. It is not what they accept, it is what facts demonstrate. He accepted responsibility for the trifling bloodshed of Bombay. The slaughter in Malabar cries out his responsibility. N. C. O. is dead in Malabar. But bitter hatred has arisen there, as fighting men from the dragon's teeth of Theseus. That is the ghastly result of the preaching of Gandhism, of N. C O , of Khilafatism. Every one speaks of the Khilafat Raj, and the one hope of the masses is in its crushing by the strong arm of the Government. Mr. Gandhi asks the Moderates to compel the Government to suspend hostilities, i.e., to let loose the wolves to destroy what lives are left. The sympathy of the Moderates is not, I make bold to say, with the murderers, the looters, the ravishers, who have put into practice the teachings of paralysing the Government of the N. C. O.'s, who have made "war on the Government" in their own way. How does Mr. Gandhi like the Mopla spirit, as shown by one of the prisoners in the Hospital, who was dying from the results of asphyxiation? He asked the surgeon, if he was going to die, and surgeon answered that he feared he would not recover. "Well, I'm glad I killed fourteen infidels," said the "Brave, God-fearing Mopla, "whom Mr. Gandhi so much admires, who "are fighting for what they consider as religion, and in a manner they consider as religious." Men who consider it "religious" to murder, rape, loot, to kill women and little children, cutting down whole families, have to be put under restraint in any civilised society.

Mr. Gandhi was shocked when some Parsi ladies had their saries torn off and very properly, yet the God-fearing hooligans had been taught that it was sinful to wear foreign cloth, and doubtless felt they were doing a religious act; can he not feel a little sympathy for thousands of women left with only rags, driven from home, for little children born of the flying mothers on roads in refugee camps? The misery is beyond description. Girl wives, pretty and sweet, with eyes half blind with weeping, distraught with terror; women who have seen their husbands hacked to pieces before their eye, in the way "Moplas consider as religious"; old women tottering, whose faces become written with anguish and who cry at a gentle touch and a kind look waking out of a stupor of misery only to weep, men who have lost all, hopeless, crushed, desperate. I have walked among thousands of them in the refugee camps, and some times heavy eyes would lift as a cloth was laid gently on the bare shoulder, and a taint watery smile of surprise would make the face even more piteous, than the stupor. Eyes full of appeal, of agonised despair, of hopeless entreaty of hopeless anguish, thousands of them camp after camp. "Shameful inhumanity proceeding in Malabar," says Mr. Gandhi. Shameful inhumanity indeed, wrought by the Moplas, and these are the victims, saved from extermination by British and Indian swords. For be it remembered the Moplas began the whole horrible business; the Government intervened to save their victims, and these thousands have been saved. Mr. Gandhi would have "hostilities suspended"—so that the Moplas may sweep down on the refugee camps, and finish their work?

I visited in Calicut three huge Committee camps, two Christian, and the Congress building and compound where doles of rice are given daily from 7 A.M. to noon. In all, the arrangements were good. Big thatched sheds, and some buildings, shelter the women and children, the men sleep outside. They are all managed by Indians, the Zamorini's Committee distributing cloths and money to all, except the Congress committee, which work independently and gives food from its own resource. At Palghat, similar arrangements

are made by the Zamorini's Committee, and the order and care in feeding are good to see.

Let me finish with a beautiful story told to me. Two Pulayas, the lowest of the submerged classes, were captured with others, and given the choice, between Islam and Death. These, the outcaste of Hindusim, the untouchables, so loved the Hinduism which had been so unkind a step-mother to them, that they chose to die Hindus rather than to live Muslim. May the God of both, Muslim and Hindu, send His messengers to these heroic souls, and give them rebirth into the Faith for which they died.

— *New India, 29 November 1921.*

APPENDIX 4

KERALA CONGRESS LEADERS AND OHERS ON THE MOPLAH OUTBREAK

a) Statement by Kerala Congress Leaders.

Truth is infinitely of more paramount importance than Hindu - Muslim unity or Swaraj, and therefore, we tell the Maulana Sahjb and his co-religionists and India's revered leader Mahatma Gandhi – if he too is unaware of the events here – that atrocities committed by the Moplahs on the Hindus are unfortunately too true and that there is nothing in the deeds of Moplah rebels which a true non-violent non-co-operator can congratulate them for. What is it for which they deserve congratulation ? Their wanton and unprovoked attack on the Hindus, the all but wholesale looting at their houses in Ernad, and parts of Valluvanad, Ponnani and Calicut Taluques; the forcible conversion of Hindus in a few places in the beginning of the rebellion and the wholesale conversion of those who stick to their homes in its later stages. the brutal murder of inoffensive Hindus, men, women, and children in cold blood, without the slightest reason except that they are 'Kaffirs' or belong to the same race as the Policemen who insulted their Tangals or entered their Mosques, the desecration and burning of Hindu Temples, the outrage on Hindu women and their forcible conversion and marriage by Moplahs; do these and similar atrocities proved beyond the shadow of a doubt by the statements recorded by us from the actual sufferers who have survived, deserve any congratulation ? On the other hand should they not call forth the strongest condemnation from all right-minded men and more especially from a representative body of Mohamedans like the Khilafat Conference pledged to non-violence under all provocation ? Did the Moplahs, who committed such attocities, sacrifice their lives in the cause of their religion?

(Sd.) K. P. Keshava Menon,	(Sd.) T. V. Mohamad,
Sec., Kerala Pro. Cong. Comit.	Sec., Ernad Khilafat Comit.

(Sd.) K. Madhavan Nair, Sec., Calicut Dis. Cong. Comit.
(Sd.) E. Karunakara Menon, Treas., Kerala Pro. Comit.
(Sd.) K. V. Gopal Menon.

Maulana Mohani justifies the looting of Hindus by Moplahs as lawful by way of commandeering in a war between the latter and the Government or as a matter of necessity when the Moplahs were forced to live in jungles. Maulana perhaps does not know that in the majority of cases, the almost wholesale looting of Hindu houses in portions of Ernad, Valluvanad and Ponani Taluques was perpetrated on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd of August before the military had arrived in the affected area to arrest or fight the rebels even before Martial law had been declared. The Moplahs had not betaken themselves at the time as Moulana supposes nor had the Hindus as a class done anything to them to deserve their hostility. The out-break commenced on the 20th August, the police and the District Magistrate withdrew from Tirurangadi to Calicut on the 21st and the policemen throughout the afflicted area had taken to their heels. There was no adversary to the Moplahs at the time whom the Hindus could possibly have helped or invited, and the attack on them was most wanton and unprovoked.

— **Madhavan Nair.**

b) Proceedings of the conference at Calicut presided over by the Zamorin Maharaja.

VI. That the conference views with indignation and sorrow the attempts made in various quarters by interested parties to ignore or minimise the crimes committed by the rebels such as

a. Brutally dishonouring women

b. Flaying people alive

c. Wholesale slaughter of men, women and children

d. Burning alive entire families

e. Forcibly converting people in thousands and slaying those who refused to get converted

f. Throwing half dead people into wells and leaving the victims for hours to struggle for escape till finally released from their sufferings by death.

g. Burning a great many and looting practically all Hindu and Christian houses in the disturbed area in which even Moplah women and children took part and robbing women of even the garments on their bodies; in short, reducing the whole non-muslim population to abject destitution.

h. Cruelly insulting the religious sentiments of the Hindus by desecrating and destroying numerous temples in the disturbed area, killing cows within the temple precincts putting their entrails on the holy image and hanging the skulls on the walls and roofs.

APPENDIX 5

AGGI RAJU'S CAPTURE AND SRIRAMARAJU'S DEATH

1. Aggi Raju's Capture :

Letter from Upendra Patnaik, Intelligence Inspector, Rajavommangi to the Officer Commanding, Agency operations, dt. Narasapatam, The 6th May, 1924.

... My previous information was that some 6 or 8 months back, when a party of Malabar Special Police visited this Kirrabu, the rebels were near Maderu river near Kirrabu. The villagers of Kirrabu, Bodlagondi, and Thalapalem knew this but never informed the police party about it. So I determined to search that country before I proceeded further and proceeded with 13 Malabar Special police party to search those hiding places. After we had gone a mile from Kirrabu along the river-bed, we found fresh foot-prints of several persons in the sand-bed. I ordered the party to stop and went with the guide to find out for more foot-prints. Close by, I found water was thrown just then and my party also saw some water thrown just then in several other places near them. Without the least noise, I signed the party to follow me and we all went up an ascent with the least sound. We saw 50 rebels including Razu and other leaders standing in a nala at a distance. Immediately the rebels opened fire on seeing us and one of Malabar spl. p.c. 1760, Narayan Nair, was wounded at the right thigh. At once I ordered to open fire and to pursue the gang after ordering two p.c.s to stay with wounded man 1760. When we opened fire the gang began to run away. We pursued them for about two miles. The men were all dead tired and could not pursue further.

I, not knowing that the men are not closely following me, entered into the gang and caught Aggi Raju, mistaking him to be Razu at first, from his beard and shrivelled hair,

and arrested him with his rifle and 8 rounds of .303 ammunition. This fellow had fired one round from the chamber at me and there was no time for him to load the rifle again before I caught him – the rifle being without magazine. Seeing me alone, another rebel who was running away in advance turned round with his sword and made a peculiar kind of noise. At once another rebel who had a gun, turned round and levelled his gun on me. I sat down having caught Aggi Razu by the hair in my front and bullet whizzed over my head. All the time I was crying at the top of my voice and with my broken Tamil, "beat, beat" *(adi, adi)*. Two p.c.s 2021 and 1652 who were following me at a distance of about 80 yards saw the rebels and opened fire at once. The rebels ran away on seeing them. The p.c.s had come in the nick of time and opened fire. Immediately afterwards my orderly p.c. 1057 of Rajavommangi p.s. also came to my rescue. I cannot say how many rounds the rebels fired at me. It was after all the work of a minute or two, I think the rebels aiming at me, the p.c.s coming to my rescue and opening fire, all this happened almost simultaneously. All the ten rounds I had in my magazine were exhausted and I had no time to re-load my rifle.

The country was very favourable to the rebels. It is a thick, shrubby jungle and we had to cross several miles in pursuing the gang. On the 4th night we had no sleep in raiding Kondapalli and on the 5th night also no sleep as we left Lagarai at 2 a.m. and the men had no tea even before the fight and they had walked more than 6 miles before we encountered the gang. With all of this all of them had done very well and especially Havildar 1983, Chappunni Nair, who had killed a rebel and was trying his best to keep up with one though for the last two days he was getting slight attacks of fever. He was maintaining a good discipline all these days. Intelligence p.c. 578 who was once caught by the gang near Thalapalli had also worked well and was present in ths fight.

In this connection, I submit that Munsif, Thigala Naganna of Lagarai, has given good work and was a help to me in many a way. Himself was also present in the fight.

Kamoji Chintalu, rebel No. 61 of Rajanapet, and 2. Sabe Mallayya, rebel No. 58 of Malamakaram, who is a warrantee in crime Nos. 23 and 24 of 1923, of Rajavommangi station under Sec. 302, I.P.C. ... were killed and several others wounded. [Seized] One .303 rifle without magazine, 8 rounds of .303 ammunition, one country gun, one khijar and a bundle of clothes ... P.c. No. 1760 had a compound fracture of his right thigh ...

2. Srirama Raju's death :

Memorandum from Jamadar K.T. Kunchu Menon, i/c Intelligence Patrol for Sub-Inspector, Alwar Nayudu, to the Officer Commanding, Chintapalli, Seedipalayam, dt. 7th May, 1924.

This morning at about 7–30 A.M. while I was camping with the ... and S.I. Alwar Nayudu, most of the p.c.s came running that a man in fair colour and round beard was going through the jungle at a distance of one furlong. I ordered to rush on and myself and party came close to him at a distance of about 100 yards. The man was trying to escape on seeing us and so I ordered to fire a few rounds in the air to frighten him. On hearing the firing sound he laid down and we came very close to him. I asked him who you are and he said, 'Sir, I am Razu and my life may be saved.' Myself, Naik Choyikutti, and p.c.No. 139, Kunhunni Panikkar, caught and brought him to the camp with others. While we were bringing, S.I. Alwar Naidu showed me two more men with guns at whom I ordered to fire. It is hoped that one of them is wounded. While we were bringing to Chintapalli via Koyyuru, Razu asked me permission to untie and to get himself relieved. On arrival in Assam Rifles camp at Koyyur, I took orders from Major Goodall to allow me to untie him for the above purpose. He consented and I took him to the eastern side of the camp under an escort of one n.c.o. and 4 men : Naik Choyikutti; p. c. 181, Gopalan; p.c. 115, Theyyuni Nayar; p.c. 139, Kunjuni Panikkar; p.c. 193, Kunhappa Nambiar.

Myself and escort were standing in front of him at a distance of four yards. Rebel Razu pretended that he was

sitting and jumped and ran away when I ordered to fire which hit him on the back and fell dead.

In this connection I should like to point out that the capture of Razu was not due to any information but only by the sharp eyes of my p.c.s and Intelligence p. c. No. 437, Mahadevagiri. All of them deserve encouragement. Naik Choyikutti acted very brilliantly during the show.

APPENDIX 6

SRIRAMA RAJU'S DEATH : THE CONTROVERSIAL DOCUMENTS

1. Press Communique, Dated Ootacamund, the 16th May, 1924 :

Telegraphic reports have already appeared in the press of the capture and shooting of the rebel leader, Alluri Srirama Raju. The Government have now received the written report of the Special Commissioner, Agency operations. It appears therefrom that Intelligence Inspector Upendra Patnaik with a patrol party of the East Coast Special Police got the information that the Raju and his gang had been in Kondapalli village for two days. He came in touch with the party on the 6th May. Both sides opened fire and two rebels were killed and Aggi Raju, an important rebel, was captured. Others, including the leader Srirama Raju escaped. On the morning of the 7th May, another patrol party of the Special Police under Jamadar Kunchu Menon captured *a man who stated that he was the leader Raju*. He was brought into Major Goodall of the Assam Rifles the same morning. Later in the day, the prisoner seized an opportunity and attempted to run away; he was fired on by the policė escort and killed. The body after being identified by the Deputy Tahsildar, Gudem, and many village officials, was cremated on the 8th. The most important rebel at large now is Gantam Dora for whose capture every effort is being made.

N. E. MARJORI BANKS,
Acting Chief Secretary to the
Government of Madras.

2. Home (political) Department – F. No. 104 of 1924 – The National Archives of India, New Delhi.

Sub : Rampa disturbances - Draft ordinance.

Serial No. 8 - *Telegram from the Government of Madras, dt. 13th May, 1925.*

Reference Agency rebellion. Patrol of special police came on Raju and party on sixth instant. Both sides opened fire and two rebels were killed and Aggiraju, an important rebel, was captured Others including leader Srirama Raju escaped. On seventh morning another patrol special police captured ***man who stated he was the rebel leader.***

He was brought into Major Goodall, Assam Rifles same morning. Later in day prisoner took opportunity to attempt to run away and was fired on by police escort and killed. Body identified by Deputy Tahsildar and village official. Cremated on eighth after being photographed. Most important rebel at large now is Gantam Dora for whose capture every effort is being made. Further reports as to the effect on the rebellion of the leader's death and as to the need now for any special Ordinance will follow.

(emphases mine-IMS).

APPENDIX 7

A. I. C. C. ON THE GOPINATH SAHA RESOLUTION

The Fourth Resolution—On Gopinath Saha.

Mr. GANDHI then moved his fourth resolution :—

> The All India Congress Committee regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha and offers its condolences to the deceased's family and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder, the All India Congress Committee strongly condemns this and all such political murders and is emphatically of opinion that all such acts are inconsistent with the Congress Creed and its resolution of Non-violent Non-coperation, and is of opinion that such acts retard the progress towards Swaraj and interfere with the preparations for Civil Disobedience which, in the opinion of the All India Congress Committee, is capable of evoking the purest sacrifice but which can only be offered in a perfectly peaceful atmosphere.

M. Gandhi in commending the resolution did not make any speech. Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel seconded the resolution.

Mr. C. R. DAS moved the following amendment to the resolution :—

> This Committee, while denouncing and dissociating itself from violence and adhering to the principle of non-violence, appreciates Gopinath Saha's ideal of self-sacrifice, misguided though it is in respect of the country's best interest, and expresses re pect for his self-sacrifice.

In moving the amendment Mr. Das said that there was hardly any difference between the original motion as pro-

posed by M. Gandhi and his amendment. Both condemned the violence of Gopinath Saha and both agreed that violence was retarding the country's progress. If there was no difference why did he forward the amendment ? The reason was simple. The question before the meeting was not one of "No-changers" *versus* "Pro-changers." It was not a party question. He brought forward the amendment because he had been deliberately and wilfully misrepresented for the Serajganj resolution, which was also misreported. Had it not been for the vulgar threat of Regulation III of '18 directed against him and others who were responsible for the Serajgunj resolution, he would not have brought forward an amendment and much less one in identical terms as the Serajganj resolution, as in the present instance. If only as a manly answer to the bluff, they should accept his amendment. The heart of Bengal was agitated over the mischievous agitation set afoot If they had any sympathy for the sentiment of Bengal, they should all unanimously vote for the amendment.

Mr. Das was seconded by Dr. Paranjpye who made a humorous speech in Hindi, and sarcastically remarked that M. Gandhi was but one of the so many saints in the country, and that they could not afford to go with him in his extreme non-violence. In the speaker's opinion M. Gandhi was trying to gulp down his impossible saintliness into the throats of his less saintly countrymen.

Mr. R. Venkataram moved another amendment urging the deletion of the following words from M. Gandhi's motion: ' regrets the murder of the late Mr. Day by the late Gopinath Saha, and though deeply sensible of the love, however misguided, of the country prompting the murder." Instead, the mover asked that the resolution should begin with regretting Mr. Day's murder and proceed to condemn etc. as in the resolution. His reason was that it was not proper to single out a single victim for sympathy. The motion was dropped for want of a seconder.

After a few other speakers had spoken on the subject, closure was applied and adopted.

M. Gandhi refused to make any reply on the ground that if the country did not know its mind at that stage of the struggle, there was no meaning in his saying anything.

Mr. Das defeated

Mr. Das's amendment on being put to the vote was declared lost, sixty-seven voting for and seventy-three against. A poll being demanded, the House divided and seventy voted for the amendment and seventy-eight voted against. The motion was declared lost.

M. Gandhi's original resolution was then put to the meeting and was carried by a majority.

[Courtesy, I. Q. R., 1924, Vol. I.]

APPENDIX 8

CHAMANALAL'S EXPOSITION OF BRITISH LABOUR PARTY

The following letter was addressed by Dewan Chamanlal, Fraternal Delegate of the All India Trade Union Congress to the delegates of the third Congress of the Labour and Socialist International (Brussels), on the 7th August 1928:–

I have been deputed by my organisation to present the case of the Workers and peasants of British India before you. I find that, as a fraternal delegate to this session of the Labour and Socialist International, I can do so only by means of a written memorandum, since the Executive has taken the decision that no fraternal delegate shall have the right of speech.

Comrades, I am here, therefore, as a witness, a spectator. What do I find ? I find that the policy of the L. S. I. with regard to India is dictated solely by the British Labour Party. The facts of the situation governing one sixth of the population of the world are presented to you by a party with imperialistic leaning, which through a memorandum of which the reputed author is Major Graham Pole, sets out details which in many respects are inaccurate and misleading bristling with suppression of facts, full of false suggestions and clothed in language which is often borrowed from the ruling class in India, the British Imperialist Government.

To illustrate my meaning let me quote two instances. The official Government publications (as well as officials themselves on many occassions) have said, in order to justify the inhuman conduct of the Government and the employees towards the workers, that Trade Unions in India are merely strike committees, and that, therefore, they cannot deal with them. This is a falsehood which has often been exposed. I do not know of any country where general

strike affecting 1,50,000 textile workers has lasted under similar conditions for over three months as in India today showing the strength of the Trade Union movement. And yet the memorandum submitted by the British Labour Party says on page 54:—

"and the Trade Unions are rather more in the nature of strike committees" – a sentence actually borrowed from a Government publication entitled "India" which is the official apologist and advocate of British Imperialism. This is purposeful. Its significance lies in this, that British Labour wishes to justify its backward and reactionary policy towards India by inducing you to believe falsely that the working classes in India are themselves backward and reactionary. As President of the last session of the All-India Trade Union Congress I can testify that no movement is better organised than ours.

Then again, in order to justify the remark in the programme submitted to you, that national freedom is principally a national concern, a deliberate suppression of truth is resorted to on page 57 where the following statement is made :—

"Many of the textile mills, coal mines, iron and steel works are in the hands of Indians and financed by Indian capital" thereby leaving you to believe that European capital is not interested in exploiting us and that the Indian problem is therefore a national and not an international one. The writter is significantly silent about the jute mills. Why? Because 74 out of 76 are in the hands of European capitalist. And the writer of the memorandum is wrong even about the only steel works in India in Indian hands. The debenture holders and financiers are in London. Most of the important mines are British owned. Hence a right against British exploitation in India must necessarily be an international right and not merely a national right. Why is this deliberately suppressed by the British Labour Party, and the suggestion thrown out prominently regarding the Indian aspect of capitalistic industrial exploitation? The British Labour Party has deliberately shut its eyes against

the fact that a Thousand Million Pounds Sterling lies invested in India, and is controlled by British capitalist. The reason is that British Labour is apparently not desirous of lending a hand against imperialistic exploitation in India and wishes the fight to be merely a national one, in order to divest itself of all responsibility. Its past record amply justifies this statement. Far from lending a hand, its recent policy has been indistinguishable from the imperialistic policy of the Conservative or the Liberal Party in Great Britain.

I am not forgetful of the fact that Mr. Arthur Henderson in his presidential speech delivered before your Conference, said :

> We are aware that unhappily this natural and least costly road towards the establishment of the workers' power does not stand open in all countries. Again and again the representative of the capitalist order endeavour to interfere by acts of violence in the course of democracy and to erect a system of despotism which forces the workers back into a status in which they are deprived of all rights.

Such humanity does him credit. But let us examine not the language of idealism but the deeds of realist politicians. Mr. Arthur Henderson is the Secretary of the British Labour Party. When his party took office in 1924 what did it do? It, of its own initiative, promulgated a law applicable against 247 million Indians, under which any man (always of course the opponents of the British Government in India) could be arrested, deported and indefinitely imprisoned without trial, nay, without even a charge being preferred. Over 200 young Indians, some of the finest in the land, have suffered under the barbarous legislation, and some to this day are still in prison or under detention. This was an act of the British Labour party. Comrades! You will forgive us in India if after this we consider the attitude of the British Labour Party towards Fascism, towards Bolshevism, towards democracy and freedom

as somewhat hypocritical. And if the Labour and Socialist International has nothing better to offer the world than to subscribe to the policy of the British Labour Party towards India, we can come to no other conclusion than that it too is saturated with reformist notions of imperialistic tendency.

Was it not an act of violence against democracy on the part of the British Labour Party to flout the will of the Indian Parliament and of the Indian nation and rule India not only with the help of military dictatorship but with a revival of Star Chamber methods of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment and deportation? The British Labour Party committed a crime against the Indian people, against itself and against Socialism. With what conviction can that Party now condemn at your Conference "the Fascist tyrrany or the Bolshevist dictatorship"? If in Italy farcial and arbitrary trials have taken place and men imprisoned, in India with the authority of the British Labour Party men have been imprisoned without trial or charge. If the Bolsheviks are alleged to have committed acts of violence, what shall we say of the summary arrests of political opponents in India, with the authority of the British Labour Party, some of whom have died in prison or committed suicide?

I am justified in saying that the British Labour Party is utterly hypocritical in its assertions of freedom and self-determination for India. At Blackpool it passed a resoluion which is mentioned in the memorandum. It runs thus:-

> The Conference declares that the Royal Commission to be appointed under the Government of India Acts should be so constituted and the method of doing its work so arranged that it will enjoy the confidence and co-operation of the Indian people.

The Commission known as the Simon Commission was duly appointed. It consisted of seven English Members of Parliament sent out to India to decide whether India is it for further measure of advance in self-Government. The people of India protested in vain. Every political party in India declared a boycott of the Commission but the Labour

Party of Great Britain remained adamant. The All-India Trades Union Congress condemned the Commission and called upon the British Labour Party to refuse its co-operation with the commission. The Labour Party turned a deaf ear. The British Labour Party sold the pass to the Conservative Party. It agreed to place two of its members on the Commssion – to act as the hangmen of the East. The Blackpool resolution said that the Commission should be constituted and its method of work so arranged that it will enjoy the confidence and co-operation of the people of India. The British Labour Party knows that neither in its constitution nor in its method does the Commission enjoy the confidence and co-operation of the Indian people. The reason is that India demands the right to determine her own destiny. But in the face of its resolution passed at Blackpool, in the face of its lip-sympathy with the principle of self-determination for oppressed nations, the British Labour Party continues to co-operate with the Conservatives and Liberals in order to fashion stronger chains of slavery for the exploited millions of India.

The hired apologist of the British Labour Party, whose memorandum on India I have referred to gives on page 61 six reasons as to why Indians refuse to co-operate with the Simon Commission. Deliberately and with a desire to take advantage of your ignorance of the facts concerning India, he leaves out the only reason which has weighed with us – namely, the right to determine our own destiny for which we ask for a round table conference with a preliminary declaration guaranteeing our inherent right to settle our own constitution and not the privilege of having our constitution settled for us by seven men, whose voice, excepting that of the Chairman, would not be trusted or respected in their own country in matters vitally affecting Great Britain.

So nervous was the British Labour Party that at the British Commonwealth Labour Conference it moved, after notice had been given by us of a censure motion against it regarding its imperialistic policy towards India, that no resolution should be admitted ; so nervous that for the first

time perhaps in the history of the British connection with India, the British Labour Party refused to have a day set apart in Parliament to discuss the Indian question, although almost challenged to it by Lord Winterton, the Conservative Under-Secretary of State for India; so nervous indeed that the British Labour Party writer of the memorandum on India submitted to the Congress of the Labour and Socialist International, says in his concluding remark that though the Indian national movement is committed to independence India does not mean independence. Such deliberate mis-statements deserve your contempt, as do also such arguments as that the British withdrawal from India would hand the workers over to the Bourgeoisie. At the present moment the whole Indian Nation has been handed over with the assistance of the British Labour Party to a foreign exploitation which knows few parallels in history.

Comrades, The British Labour Party has betrayed India and betrayed socialism. It is for you to decide whether you will repeat, in regard to the colonial question, the imperialistic intentions hidden under the cloak of socialistic slogans of the British Labour Party and thus condemn yourselves in the eyes of the oppressed, exploited workers of the world, or stand by them without hesitation, without reservation and without cowardice.

APPENDIX 9

MOTILAL NEHRU ON *AGENTS PROVOCATEURS*

[During the debate on Bengal Ordinance in the Central Legislative Assembly on 5 February, 1925, Pandit Motilal Nehru presented an able refutation of the argument from the Government side for the promulgation of the ordinance. During the course of his able and erudite speech, Pandit Motilal also touched upon the sensitive point of *Agents Provocateurs*. That portion of the speech is given below. Courtesy, I. A. R., 1925, Vol. I.]

AGENTS PROVOCATEUR

The Home Member had, the other day, expressed his indignation at the mention of *agents provocateur*. This was what Sir Reginald Clarke, ex-Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, had, written to *The Times*: "I have had much experience of these agencies in the East, and often wonder whether they do not raise more devils than they lay. One has to use them (Police informers) to fight anarchy, but their inevitable concomitants, the *agents provocateur* and the *letter de cachet*, alienate public opinion to such an extent that they can never be continued for long."

There was another point to be noticed. Mr. B. K. Dutt and Mr. J. L. Chatterjee had forwarded through the Government of India a memorial to the Secretary of State. Of these persons who were arrested, one of them was to be the Editor of *Forward* newspaper, and the other, the Manager Editor of a vernacular newspaper which had declared its policy to be Swarajist. They had been granted an amnesty in 1918, and were arrested again under Regulation III. The charges against them were: (1) you were arrested and detained as State prisoners and released under the Royal amnesty; (2) you were conspiring with certain person to overthrow the British Government; (3) you started and maintained Aśhrams which were centres of revolutionary recruitment; (4) you were directly connected with the

collection of fire arms; (5) you were connected with Indian agents of the Bolshevik M. N. Roy; and (6) you were privy to the murder of Police officers. "Who is there," asked Pandit Motilal, in this House, who can defend himself against such charges? If I were charged with them now, what can I say?

Pandit Motilal further quoted from this memorial, stating that a certain *agent provocateur* was locked up in a gaol and gave secret information from the gaol that, during Non-co-operation days, this person was trying to incite young men to form a party of violence. The Memorialists believe that whatever violence had been committed in Bengal was due to innocent men being duped by this *agent provocateur*, and further, that this agent's name leaked out in an identification parade in connection with the Alipore Conspiracy Case, and it came out in Court, and that his name had been penned through and that of an accused put instead for obvious reasons. The point was not pressed by the Counsel for the defence. Pandit Motilal asked whether, in the face of these facts the Home Member would feel any indignation at the mention of *agent provocateur*. People in this country thought that there were such agents.

Continuing, Pandit Motilal referred to the remark of the Home Member, that because the Viceroy, who was an ex-Chief Justice of England, had examined the cases, therefore, they must accept his decision without further going into the matter. "If the Viceroy were again to take his seat on the Bench and had the same evidence placed before him, he would be the first man to throw it out as wholly unreliable. Leaving aside the ex-Chief Justice, even if there were angels examining these materials, the conclusions would be unreliable. The materials placed before you is tainted and unrealiable. Some one said that a Judge did not make a good administrator. I do not agree with that. The Judge when he becomes an administrator, is like a boat cut off from its moorings. There must be evidence which should stand the test provided by Law."

The Pandit saw absolutely no justification for the issue of the Ordinance, but when the Ordinance was pro-

mulgated by the Governor-General, it was wrong to say that the responsibility was solely that of the Governor-General in keeping it in force. "I deny, Sir, that His Excellency is solely responsible for keeping it in force. I say that this House has the constitutional right and responsibliity, undivided and unshared by any body, to decide, when it meets in session, whether the ordinance is to continue or not. With this object, I submitted a Bill, but His Excellency has disallowed it. Firstly, His Excellency had no justification for exercising the right of promulgating the Ordinance; secondly, His Excellency has no say in the matter, which is for this House alone to determine, whether the Ordinance should be confirmed or withdrawn. He admitted that one section made the introduction of Bills subject to disallowance by the Governor-General, but this power could only be exercised in very exceptional circumstances. If there was, for instance, a rebellion in India, he might have disallowed the introduction of this bill. There was no rebellion on foot. On the other hand, dinner parties were going on (laughter), and they were going to have Baby weeks as well (renewed laughter). Pandit Motilal said that the Home Member had told them that the Government was not devoid of political foresight. He was sorry to say that commodity had never been found to be in the bureaucratic shop.

APPENDIX 10

THE REVOLUTIONARY

[A four-page pamphlet dated the 1st January 1925, issued over the signature of Vijay Kumar, President, Central Council, The R. P. of India, was the production of Sachindra Nath Sanyal. The pamphlet was very widely distributed, by hand and by post, 'from Peshawar to Rangoon in one day'.]

THE REVOLUTIONARY

AN ORGAN OF THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY OF INDIA.
India — 1st January 1925.

Vol. I. No. I

(Every honest Indian should read the whole of it and circulate it among his friends.)

Manifesto of the Revolutionary party of India.

"Chaos is necessary to the birth of a new star" and the birth of life is accompanied by agony and pain. India is also taking a new birth, and is passing through that inevitable phase, when chaos and agony shall play their destined role, when all calculations shall prove futile, when the wise and the mighty shall be bewildered by the simple and the weak, when great empires shall crumble down and new nations shall arise and surprise humanity with the splendour and glory which shall be all its own.

This new power, which is shaking the world from its very depths, this new spirit, which is working miracles behind the scene, is also manifesting itself in the young blood of India and is taking the shape of a movement which is despised and ignored by the wise and the learned, and is being described as the wild dreams of a few mad men. This remarkable movement is the revolutionary movement of young India.

This revolutionary movement has unnerved the weak. has inspired the robust and the healthy and has confounded the wordly wise and the learned. This movement can never be crushed just as much as the coming of the spring can never be thwarted. It will never die out until it has fulfilled the mission for which it has taken its birth. Tyrants will oppress it, the faithless will taunt it, and the confounded will denounce it ; but thoughts and ideas can never be crushed by the sword, and the noble impulse that takes birth in the very depth of our being can neither be ignored nor taunted.

This revolutionary movement is the manifestation of the new life that has taken birth in the nation. To denounce this life is to denounce one's own understanding.

Twenty years of ruthless repression has not been able to crush it. Scathing denunciations by the renowned public leaders have not been able to arrest its steady growth. The movement stands mightier today than that what it was before. The prospects of this revolutionary party were never so bright as they are today. The future is assured.

Let no Indian deny the existence of this revolutionary party in order to denounce the repressive measures of the foreign rulers. The foreigners have no right to rule over India and therefore they must be denounced and driven out, not that they have committed any particular act of violence or crime. These are the natural consequences of a foreign rule. This foreign rule must be abolished. They have no justification to rule over India except the justification of the sword, and therefore the revolutionary party has taken to the sword. But the sword of the revolutionary party bears ideas at its edge.

The immediate object of the revolutionary party in the domain of politics is to establish a Federal Republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution. The final constitution of this Republic shall be framed and declared at a time when the representatives of India shall have the power to carry out their decisions. But the basic principles of this Republic shall be universal suffrage, and

the abolition of all systems which make the exploitation of man by man possible; *e. g.*, the railways and other means of transportation and communications, the mines and other kinds of very great industries such as the manufacture of steel and ships, all these shall be nationalised. In this Republic the electors shall have the right to recall their representatives if so desired, otherwise the democracy shall become a mockery. In this Republic, the legislature shall have the power to control the executives and replace them whenever necessity will arise.

The revolutionary party is not national but international in the sense that its ultimate object is to bring harmony in the world by respecting and guaranteeing the diverse interests of the different nations; it aims not at competition but at co-operation between the different nations and states, and in this respect it follows the footsteps of the great Indian Rishis of the glorious past and of Bolshevik Russia in the modern age. Good for humanity is no vain and empty word with the Indian revolutionaries. But the weak, the coward and the powerless can do no good either to themselves or to humanity.

With regard to the communal questions, the revolutionary party contemplates to grant whatever rights the different communities may demand, provided they do not clash with the interests of other communities and they lead ultimately to hearty and organic union of the different communites in the near future.

In the domain of economic and social welfare the party will foster the spirit of co-operation in as large a scale possible. Instead of private and unorganised business enterprises, the party prefers co-operative unions.

In the spiritual domain the party aims at establishing the truth and preaching it that the world is not "Maya" – an illusion to be ignored and despised at, but that it is the manifestation of the one indivisible soul, the supreme source of all knowledge, and all beauty.

This revolutionary party has its own policy and its own programme. It cannot for obvious reasons divulge all

its secrets. But when it will become quite sure that the government happens to know more than our own people, then the public will also be informed of its plans and methods without any hesitation at all.

This revolutionary party pursues the policy of co-operation when possible and dissociation where necessary with the Congress and its different parties. But this party views all constitutional agitations in the country with contempt and ridicule. It is a mockery to say that India's salvation can be achieved through constitutional means, where no constitution exists. It is self-deception to say that India's political liberty can be attained through peaceful and legitimate means when the enemy is determined to break the peace at his own convenience and the fine phrase "legitimate" looses all its charm and significance when one pledges himself to maintain peace at all costs.

Our public leaders hesitate to speak in plain terms that India wants complete autonomy free from foreign control. They perhaps are ignorant of the fact that nations are born through the inspiration of great ideals. The spiritual ideal which hesitates to accept this spirit of complete autonomy can hardly be called spiritual though it may seemingly appear the most sublime. The time has come to speak the truth in the most unmistakable terms and to place before the nation an ideal worth the name.

The ideal before us is to serve humanity in an organised way. This ideal can never be realised by India so long as she remains in bondage and slavery, so long as India remains British India. In order that India may realise her ideal she must have a separate and independent existence. This independence can never be achieved through peaceful and constitutional means. Even a child can understand that the laws that govern British India are not made by the Indians nor can they have any control over them. British India can never be transformed into a Federal Republic of the United States of India through the British laws and constitutions. Young Indians! Shake off your illusions, face realities with a stout heart, and do not avoid struggles, diffculties and sacrifices. The inevitable is to come. Do not be misguided

any more. Peace and tranquillity you cannot have and India's liberty can never be achieved through peaceful and legal means. The following memorable words of a great English author Mr.Robertson may serve to make the wise men of India wiser still.

"The movement and programme of reform was mainly the achievement of Irish and Protestant leaders, to whom British statesmen had revealed the fatal secret that England could be bullied but not argued into justice and generosity" (England under the Hanoverians, p. 197). Indian public leaders are still ignorant of this "fatal secret" or else they are foolishly wise to ignore it.

The wise men of India say that it is absurd to cherish the hope that India can be re-conquered by the force of arms, though they forget that it is equally or more absurd to believe that a handful of Englishmen have kept under subjugation by the force of arms, one-fifth of the whole human race. Posterity may well doubt the authenticity of this fact that a handful of Englishmen ever ruled over the Indian continent, it is so inconceivable.

A few words more about terrorism and anarchism. These two words are playing the most mischievous part in India today. They are being invariably misapplied whenever any reference to the revolutionaries is to made, because it is so very convenient to denounce the revolutionaries under that name. The Indian revolutionaries are neither terrorists nor anarchists. They never aim at spreading anarchy in the land, and therefore they can never properly be called anarchists. Terrorism is never their object and they cannot be called terrorists. They do not believe that terrorism alone can bring independence and they do not want terrorism for terrorism's sake, although they may at times resort to this method as a very effective means of retaliation. The present government exists solely because the foreigners have successfully been able to terrorise the Indian people. The Indian people do not love their English masters, they do not want them to be here; but they do help the Britishers simply because they are terribly afaid of them; and this very fear

resists the Indians from extending their helping hands to the revolutionaries, not that they do not love them.

This official terrorism is surely to be met by counter terrorism. A spirit of utter helplessness pervades every strata of our society and terrorism is an effective means of restoring the proper spirits in the society without which progress will be difficult. Moreover the English masters and their hired lackeys can never be allowed to do what ever they like, unhampered, unmolested. Every possible difficulty and resistance must be thrown in their way. Terrorism has an international bearing also, because the attentions of the enemies of England are at once drawn towards India through the acts of terrorism and revolutionary demonstrations and the revolutionaries are thereby able to form an alliance with them, and thus expedite the speedy attainment of India's deliverance. But this revolutionary party has deliberately abstained itself from entering into this terrorist campaign at the present moment even at the greatest of provocations in the form of outrages committed on their sisters and mothers by the agents of a foreign government, simply because the party is waiting to deliver the final blow. But when expediency will demand it the Party will unhesitatingly enter into a desperate campaign of terrorism, when the life of every officer and individual who will be helping the foreign rulers in any way will be made intolerable, be he Indian or European, high or low. But even then the party will never forget that terrorism is not their object, and they will try incessantly to organise a band of selfless and devoted workers who will devote their best energies towards the political and social emancipation of their country. They will always remember that "the making of nations requires the self-sacrifice of thousands of obscure men and women who care more for the idea of their country, than for their own comfort or interest, their own lives or the lives of those whom they love".

(Sd.) VIJAY KUMAR,
President, Central Council,
The R. P. of India.

APPENDIX 11

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE HINDUSTAN REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

Name :

The name of the association shall be the Hindustan Republican Association.

Object :

The object of the association shall be to establish a Federated Republic of the United States of India by an organised and armed revolution.

The final form of the constitution of the Republic shall be framed and declared by the representatives of the people at the time when they will be in a position to enforce their decisions.

The basic principle of the republic shall be universal suffrage and the abolition of all systems which make any kind of exploitation of man by man possible.

Constitution – Governing Body :

The governing body of the association shall be the Central Council composed of the representatives of every province of India. All decisions of the Central Council shall be arrived at by unanimous consent. The Central Council shall be vested with absolute powers.

The principal function of the Central Council shall be to supervise, adjust and co-ordinate the activities in the different provinces of which it shall have full knowledge.

The Central Council shall be in direct charge of the work to be carried on in countries outside India.

Provincial Organisation :

There shall be a committee ordinarily of five (5) men representing the five (5) different departments of the asso-

ciation in every province which shall regulate all the activities of the association in the province.

All decisions of the committee shall be arrived at by unanimous consent.

Department :

Every provincial organisation shall have the following departments :

1. Propaganda.
2. Collection of men.
3. Collection of Funds and Terrorism.
4. Collection and storage of arms and ammunitions.
5. Foreign connection.

1. *Propaganda* shall be carried on –
   (a) by an open and a secret press,
   (b) through private conversations,
   (c) through public platforms,
   (d) through a system of organised *Kathas*, and
   (e) through magic lantern slides.

2. *Collection of men* shall be done by organisers in charge of different districts.

3. *Funds* shall be collected generally by means of voluntary subscriptions and occasionally by contributions exacted by force. In extreme cases of repressions by agent or agents of a foreign government it shall be the duty of the association to retaliate in whatever from it shall consider suitable.

Every effort shall be made to arm every member of the association ; but all such arms shall be stored at different centres and be used according to the directions of the provincial committee only.

No arms shall be removed from any place in the district or used without the knowledge and the permission of the district organiser or the officer in-charge of this deparment.

5. *Foreign connection*: This department shall carry on its work under the direct orders from the C. C.

District organiser - His duties :

The district organiser shall be in sole charge of the members of his district.

He shall try to start branches of this association in every part of his district. In order to have efficient recruitment he should keep himself in touch with the different public bodies and institutions in his district.

The district organisers shall be subordinate in every way to the provincial committee who shall supervise and direct all their activities.

The district organisers must see that the members are divided into separate groups and the different groups do not know each other.

So far as possible the district organiser of any province must not know the activities of each other and if possible they must also not know each other by person or by name.

No district organiser shall leave his station without previously informing his superior.

Qualifications of a District Organiser :

1. He must have the tact and the ability to guide and handle men of different temperaments.

2. He must have the capacity to grasp political, social and economical problems of the present day with special reference to his Motherland.

3. He must be able to grasp the spirit of the history of India, with special reference to the partcular civilization which India has evolved.

4. He must have faith in the mission and the destiny of a free India, which is to bring harmony in the different spheres of human activities both spiritual and material.

5. He must be courageous and self-sacrificing without which all his brilliant qualities will have no real value.

Provincial Council and Central Council :

P. C. and C. C. members must see that every member of this association gets full scope and ample opportunity

to develop and use his individual abilities, without which the association will tend to disintegrate.

PROGRAMME

All the activities of the association shall be divided into two parts, public and private.

Public:

1. To start associations in the forms of clubs, libraries, seva samitis and the like.

2. To start labour and peasant organisations. Suitable men must be engaged on behalf of the association to organise and control the labourers in the different factories, the railways and in the coalfields, and instil into their minds that they are not for the revolution but that the revolution is for them.

Similarly the Kisans must also be organised.

3. To start a weekly paper in every province to propagate the idea of an independent Indian Republic.

4. To publish booklets and pamphlets with a view to enlighten the public as to the course of events and the current of thoughts as prevalent in the countries outside India.

5. To utilise and influence the Congress and other public activities as far as possible.

Private:

(*a*) To establish a secret press and through it to publish such literature which cannot easily be published openly.

(*b*) To circulate such literature.

(*c*) To establish branches of this association in every part of the country, district by district.

(*d*) To collect funds in as many ways as possible.

(*e*) To send suitable men to foreign countries where they may get military or scienific training so that they may become military or scientific experts to take charge of armies and ammunition factories at the time of open rebellion.

(*f*) To import arms and ammunition and also to manufacture them, as far as possible, in the country.

(*g*) To remain in close touch and to co-operate with the Indian revolutionaries outside India.

(*h*) To get the members of the association enlisted into the present army.

(*i*) To enlist the sympathy of the public to our cause by occasional retaliatory measures and propaganda and thus create a band of sympathisers.

MEMBERSHIP

All members shall be recruited by organisers in charge of different districts in every province. Every member must be ready to devote his whole time for the association and to risk his life if necessary.

He must obey the commands of the district organiser implicitly.

He should develop his own initiative and remember that the success of the association depends much on the resourcefulness, the initiative and the sense of duty of its individual members.

He must behave in a manner that may not prejudice the cause for which his association stands or may not do any harm directly or indirectly to this organisation.

No member of this association shall belong to any other organisation without the consent of the district organiser.

No member shall leave his station without informing the district organiser about it.

Every member must try to avoid being suspected of revolutionary connections by the police or public.

Every member must remember that his individual behaviour and mistakes might lead to the ruin of the whole organisation.

No member shall conceal anything from the district organiser as far as his public life is concerned.

Members who will betray shall be punished either with expulsion or death.

The authority of punishment shall rest entirely with the "P. C."

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APPENDIX 12

COURT STATEMENT OF BHAGAT SINGH AND BATUKESHWAR DUTT

Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt, the two accused in the Delhi Assembly Bomb case, were both sentenced to transportation for life at the trial held in Delhi on the 12th June 1929. In the course of a statement they made to the court they explained their motives in throwing the bombs in the Assembly. According to them these were thrown not with the object of taking life but to draw the world's attention to the conditions in India. The fact that in a crowded chamber no one was seriously hurt showed with what care to avoid loss of life the bombs were thrown. The Assembly, according to them, was specially chosen for this demonstration as it had been used by Government repeatedly to flout the National demand and had become a symbol of India's humiliation and helplessness. In the course of their statement to the Court, Bhagat Singh and Dutt said as follows:

We humbly claim to be no more than serious students of history and the conditions of our country and human aspirations and we despise hypocrisy. Our practical protest was against an institution which since its birth has eminently helped to display not only its worthlessness but its far-reaching power for mischief. The more we have pondered, the more deeply we have been convinced that it exists only to demonstrate to the world India's humiliation and helplessness and it symbolises the overriding domination of irresponsible and autocratic rule. Time and again the national demand has been pressed by the people's representatives, only to find the wastepaper basket as its final destination. Solemn resolutions passed by the House have been contemptuously trampled under foot on the floor of the so-called Indian Parliament. Resolutions regarding the repeal of repressive and arbitrary measures have been treated with sublime contempt and Government's measures and proposals rejected as unacceptable by elected members have been restored by a stroke of the pen.

In brief inspite of earnest endeavour we have utterly failed to find any justification for the existence of the institution which, despite all pomp and splendour organised with the hard-earned money of the sweating millions of India, is only a hollow show and a mischievous make-believe. And alike have we failed to comprehend the mentality of public leaders who help to squander public time and money on so manifestly stage managed an exhibition of India's helpless subjection. We have been ruminating upon the wholesale arrests of leaders of the labour movement. When the introduction of the Trades Disputes Bill brought us into the Assembly to watch its progress and the course of the debate, it only served to confirm our conviction that the laboring millions of India had nothing to expect from the institution that stood as a menacing monument to the strangling power of the exploiters and the serfdom of helpless labourers.

Finally the insult of what we considered an inhuman and barbarous measure was hurled on the devoted heads of the representatives of the entire country and the starving and struggling millions were deprived of their primary right and sole means of improving their economic welfare. None who has felt like us for the dumb driven drudges of labourers could possibly witness this spectacle with equanimity. None whose heart bleeds for those who have given their life blood in silence to the building up of the economic structure of the exploiter, of whom the Government happens to be the biggest in the country, could repress the cry of the soul in agonising anguish, which so ruthless a blow wrung out of our hearts. Consequently, bringing in mind the words of the late Mr S R. Das, once Law Member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, which appeared in the famous letter he had addressed to his son, to the effect that the bomb was necessary to awaken England from her dreams, we dropped the bombs on the floor of the Assembly Chamber to register our protest on behalf of those who had no other means left to give expression to their heart-rending agony. Our sole purpose was "to make the deaf hear" and to give the heedless a timely warning.

Others have as keenly felt as we have done and from under the seeming sereneness of the sea of Indian humanity a veritable storm is about to break out. We have only hoisted the "danger signal" to warn those who are speeding along without heeding the grave dangers. We have only marked the end of the era of utopain non-violence of whose futility the rising generation has been convinced beyond the shadow of a doubt Out of our sincerest good-will to and love of, humanity, have we adopted this method of warning to prevent untold sufferings which we, like millions of others, clearly foresee.

We have used the expression "utopian non-violence" in the foregoing paragraph which requires some explanation. Force, when aggressively applied, is "violence" and is, therefore, morally unjustifiable. But when it is used in furtherance of a legitimate case, it has its moral justification. Elimination of force at all costs is utopian and the new movement which has arisen in the country and of which we have given a warning is inspired by the ideals which guided Guru Govind Singh and Shivaji, Kemal Pasha and Riza Khan, Washington and Garibaldi. Lafayette and Lenin. As both the alien Government and the Indian public leaders appeared to have shut their eyes and closed their ears against the existence and voice of this movement we felt our duty to sound a warning where it could not go unheard.

We have so far dealt with the motive behind the incident in question and now we must define the extent of our intention. It cannot be gainsaid that we bore no personal grudge or malice against any one of those who received slight injuries or against any other person in the Assembly. On the contary we repeat that we hold human lives sacred beyond words and would sooner lay down our our own lives in the service of humanity than injure any one else. Unlike mercenary soldiers of imperialist armies, who are disciplined to kill without compunction, we respect and, in so far as it lies in us, attempt to save human life. And still we admit having deliberatley thrown bombs into the Assembly chamber.

Facts, however, speak for themselves and the intention should be judged from the result of the action without drawing upon hypothetical circumstances and presumptions. Despite the evidence of the Government expert, the bombs that were thrown in the Assembly chamber resulted in slight damage to an empty bench and a few abrasions in less than half a dozen cases. While the Government scientist ascribed this result to a miracle, we see nothing but precisely scientific process in it all. The fist two bombs exploded in vacant spaces within wooden barriers of desks and benches. Secondly, even those who were within even two feet of the explosion, for instance, Mr. Sanker Rao and Sir George Schuster, were either not hurt or only slightly scratched. Bombs of the capacity deposed to by Government expert (though his estimate being imaginary is exaggerated) loaded with effective charge of potassium chlorate and sensitive picrate would have smashed the barrier, and lain many low within some yards of the explosion. Again had they been loaded with some other high explosive with the charge of destructive pellets or darts they would ha.e sufficed to wipe out a majority of the members of the Legislative Assembly. Still again we could have flung them into the official box chokeful with people of note. And, finally, we could have ambushed Sir John Simon whose luckless Commission was loathed by all responsible people and who was sitting in the President's gallery at the time. All this, however, was beyond our intention and the bombs did no more than they were designed to do and the miracle consisted of no more than the deliberate aim which landed them in safe places.

We then deliberately offered ourselves to bear the penalty for what we had done and to let the imperialist exploiters know that by crushing individuals they cannot kill ideas. By crushing two insignificant units, a nation cannot be crushed. We wanted to emphasise the historical lesson that *letters de cachet* and Bastilles could not crush the revolutionary movement in France. Gallows and Siberian mines could not extinguish the Russian Revolution. Blood Sundays and Black and Tans failed to strangle the movement of Irish freedom. Can Ordinance and Safety Bills snuff out the flame of freedom in India? Conspiracy cases trumped up

or discovered and incarceration of all young men who cherish the vision of a greater ideal cannot check the march of the revolution. But a timely warning, if not unheeded, can help to prevent loss of life and general suffering. We took it upon ourselves to provide this warning and our duty is done.

Bhagat Singh was asked in the lower court as to what we meant by the word "revolution". In answer to that question we woul I say that "revolution" does not necessarily involve sanguinary strife, nor is there any place in it for individual vendetta. It is not the cult of the bomb and pistol. By revolution we mean that the present order of things which is based on manifest injustice must change. Producers or labourers, in spite of being the most necessary element of society, are robbed by their exploiters of the fruits of their labour and deprived of their elementary right. On the one hand, the peasant who grows corn for all starves with his family. The weaver who supplies the world market with textile fabrics cannot find enough to cover his own and his children's bodies. Masons, smiths and carpenters, who rear magnificent places, live and perish in slums, and on the other hand, capitalist exploiters, parasites of society, squander millions on their whims. The terrible inequality and forced disparity of chances are heading towards chaos. This state of affairs cannot last and it is obvious that the present order of society is merry-making on the brink of a volcano and innocent children of exploiters no less than millions of exploited are walking on the edge of a dangerous precipice. The whole edifice of this civilization, if not saved in time shall crumble.

Radical change, therefore, is necessary, and it is the duty of those who realize this to reorganize society on a socialistic basis. Unless this is done and exploitation of man and of nations, which goes masquerading as imperialism is brought to an end, the suffering and carnage with which humanity is threatened today cannot be prevented and all talk of ending wars and ushering in an era of of universal peace is undisguised hypocrisy.

By revolution we mean the ultimate establishment of an order of society which may not be threatened by such breakdown and in which the sovereignty of the proletariat should be recognised and as a result of which a world federation should redeem humanity from the bondage of capitalism and the misery of imperial wars.

This is our idea and with this ideology for our inspiration we have given a fair and loud enough warning. If, however, it goes unheeded and the present system of government continues to be an impediment in the way of the natural forces that are welling up, a grim struggle must ensue, involving the overthrow of all obstacles and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat to pave the way for the consummation of the ideal revolution.

Revolution is the inalienable right of mankind. Freedom is the imprescriptible birghright of all. The labourer is the real sustainer of society. The sovereignty of the people is the ultimate destiny of workers. For these ideals and for this faith we shall welcome any suffering to which we may be condemned. To the altar of this revolution we have brought our youth as incense, for no sacrifice is too great for so magnificent a cause. We are content. We await the advent of revolution. Long live revolution.

APPENDIX 13

THE FIRST LAHORE CONSPIRACY CASE

The Lahore Conspiracy and Saunders Murder Cases opened on the 10th July 1929 before Rai Saheb Pandit Srikishen, Special Magistrate, in the Lahore Central Jail. All approaches to the jail as far as the Lawrence Garden were strictly guarded by the police and the streets were patrolled by European sergeants on motor cycles. As the accused were brought a large number of youngmen, who had collected in the Jail Road, shouted "Long Live Revolution" etc.

There were in all 32 accused. Of this 7 turned approvers, 9 were absconding and the remaining 16 were being actually tried. All the accused had been in police custody for about two months and a half ever since their arrest. The following were the 16 accused:

(1) Sukhdev, a native of Lyallpur, arrested on April 15 in Lahore bomb factory. (2) Kishorilal Ratan of Hoshiarpore bomb factory. (3) Sheo Varma arrested in Shaharanpur. (4) Gayaprasad of Cawnpore arrested in Shaharanpur. (5) Jaidev arrested in Shaharanpur. (6) Jatindra Nath Das, Assistant Secretary, South Calcutta Congress Committee, arrested in Calcutta, (7) Bhagat Singh arrested in Delhi and a convict in the Assembly Bomb Case. (8) Kamal Nath Trivedi, a student of Vidyasagar College, Calcutta, arrested at Bettiah. (9) Batukeshwar Dutt, son of G. D. Dutt of Burdwan, Bengal, arrested in Delhi, a convict in the Assembly Bomb Case. (10) Jatindra Nath Sanyal, of Allahabad arrested on July 4. (11) Agyaram of Sialkot Disttict. (12) Desraj, student, D. A. V. College, Lahore. (13) Premdutt of Gujarat, ex-student, D. A. V. College, Lahore. (14) Surendra Nath Pandey, arrested in Cawnpore on July 8. (15) Mahabir Singh of Dist. Etah. (16) Ajay Kumar Ghose arrested in Cawnpore on July 8.

The absconders according to the police were :

(1) Bhagabati Charan of Lahore. (2) Yashpal of Dharamshala. (3) Bejoy Kumar Sinha of Cawnpore. (4) Chandra Sekhar Azad of Bhilapore, Benares. (5) Raghunath of Benares. (6) Kailash of Jhanshi. (7) Satgurdayal Avasthi of Cawnpore, arrested in May and subsequently bailed out, now absconding.

The following were the approvers. They were granted Crown pardon and their confessions recorded by the City Magistrate :

(1) Joygopal arrested on April 15 in Lahore Bomb Factory. (2) Hansraj Vorah, student, Foreman Christian College, Lahore (3) Ramsaran Das of Karpurthala, convicted to transportation in connection with the bomb outrage on His Excellency, the Viceroy Lord Hardinge in 1914. (4) Lalit Mukherji, son of an Allahabad advocate. (5) Brahma Dutt arrested in Cawnpore. (6) Phanindra Ghose arrested in Calcutta. (7) Monmohan Mukherji of Champaran.

Mr. George Trevor Hamilton Harding, Senior Superintendent of police, Lahore, was the main complainant in the case. Submitting a *Charge sheet* under Sections 121, 121-A, 122 and 123 I. P. C. the complainant said that the accused along with others had, at Lahore and other places in British India at various times and occasions, commencing from the year 1924 and continuing up to the present time of their arrest, been engaged in conspiracy to wage war against His Majesty the King Emperor and to deprive him of the sovereignty of British India and to overawe by criminal force the Government established by law in British India and collect men, arms and ammunitions for, or otherwise make preparation for the said object and purpose. They further concealed the existence of the design to wage war against the King Emperor, intending by such concealment, to facilitate, or knowing it to be likely that such concealment would facilitate, waging of such war. With these objects these accused along with others formed a party known as the "Hindusthan Republican Association" and the "Indian Republican Army", and held their meeting at Lahore and

other places in British India with a view to overthrow by force the Government established by law in India and to establish a Federated Republican Government in its stead.

Complainant further stated that the means devised to be adopted to attain these objects were as follows: Collection of arms, men and ammunitions and also money for purchase of arms and munitions, the obtaining of money for the same purpose by means of forcing and robbing banks and treasuries and by dacoities which necessarily involved murders, the manufacturing of explosive bombs for the purpose of murders and to overawe the Government, murder of police and other officials and persons interested in or assisting the administration of the Government of British India, of persons who obstructed the carrying out of the objects of conspiracy and persons who proved obnoxious to their party, blowing up of trains, production, possession and circulation of seditious and revolutionary literatures, rescue of convicts and persons in lawful custody, seduction of educated youths with a view to enlist them in the conspiracy to obtain relief subscriptions among persons in foreign countries who were interested in the accomplishment of a revolution in India.

That in pursuance of the said conspiracy in British India an attempt was made to murder Mr. Banerji, Inspector, C. I. D., at Benares on 13-1-1928, embezzlement of Rs. 3190 was committed by Kailash Patti, alias Kali Charan (absconder) who was an employee in the sub-post office Burhalganj, district Gorakhpur on 26-6-28, to be utilised by the party in the furtherance of their common object. Dacoity at the Punjab National Bank, Lahore, was attempted on 4-2-28. Mr. Saunders, Assistant Superintendent of Police and Chaman Singh, head constable were murdered in Lahore on 17th December, 1928. Bomb was thrown in the Assembly Chamber (Delhi) and shots were fired therein on 8-2-29 causing severe injuries to Sir Bomanji Dalal and others Dacoity at Maulnia was committed on 7-6-29 causing the death of Banke Mahton Koeri, owner of the house. The accused along with others were manufacturing bombs at Lahore, Saharanpore, Calcutta and Agra, factories at Lahore and

Saharanpore having since been captured. The accused visited different towns in British India to seduce the youths and to induce men to join their conspiracy.

That in pursuance of the said conspiracy in British India preparations for the following actions were made but did not succeed – to blow up the train carrying the members of the Simon Commission by means of a dynamite, to rescue Jagadish Chandra Chatterji who was a convict in connection with the Kakori Conspiracy Case and Sachindra Nath Sanyal, another convict of their party. The order of the Local Government was attached to the charge sheet.

The complainant also submitted that in respect of other offences committed by the accused separate charges have been presented to this court. It was also submitted that 9 among the 25 accused were absconding.

Opening the prosecution case Mr. Corden Noad, Government Advocate, said:

"There are 32 persons involved in this case of whom 7 are approvers, 9 are absconding and are still at large, and 16 are placed on their trial and are present in the court. They will be tried under the ordinary criminal law of the land for offences alleged to have been committed by them, while evidence will be recorded under Section 512 Cr. P. C. against 9 absconding accused. I desire to emphasise the fact that this is an ordinary trial under the ordinary law and no political section or system is in any way involved. No social, religious or educational body or institution is, or can be affected by the outcome of this prosecution, except so far as it is in the interest of all citizens of a civilized community.

It may not be out of place at this stage to recall the occurrence of the murder of Saunders, A. S. P. and Chaman Singh, head constable. Two armed men were shot down on broad day light in the streets of Lahore on 17th December, 1928 and the police were unable at once to apprehend the culprits. Coupled with universal condemnation of this dastardly murder, severe criticism was levelled against the

police in the Council and in the newspapers because of the delay which took place in the detection of the culprits."

Speaking of various intentions, designs and acts which form part of the subject matter of the case, Mr. Noad said : The accused were members of a revolutionary party which became active throughout northern India. At a meeting held at Delhi in August 1928, a central committee was constituted representing different provinces. In that meeting following plans and resolutions were adopted and passed :

(1) Phanindra Nath, approver, was elected officer-in-charge of Behar and Orissa, Sukhdev and Bhagat Singh, accused were to be in charge of the Punjab, Shiv Varma, Bejoy Kumar Sinha and Chandra Sekhar Azad (last two absconded) were to be in charge of the United Provinces, Kundan Lal, *alias* Partab (absconding) was elected for Rajputana and the Central Provinces, Chandra Sekhar Azad was also to be in a charge of the Military Department.

(2) It was decided that officers in charge should be held responsible for any work or action to be accomplished in the province.

(3) All matters relating to finance were to be dealt with by the Central body.

(4) All arms and ammunitions should be placed with the Central body.

The main aims and objects were — (1) to establish Republican Government by means of organisation known as the Hindustan Republican Association and Indian Republican Army.

(2) To establish a reign of terror by murder of officials who took prominent part in such cases as Kakori Conspiracy Case and other persons who were for various reasons obnoxious to the conspiracy.

(3) To organise escape of convicts.

(4) To raise funds by every possible means by voluntary subscriptions, by dacoity or by contributions from abroad.

(5) Seduction of educated youths with a view to enlist them in the Indian Republican Army.

Overt acts committed in the furtherance of the conspiracy include:

(1) Murder of Mr. Saunders and Chaman Singh.

(2) The Assembly Bomb Outrage.

(3) Dacoity at the Punjab National Bank, Lahore.

(4) Dacoity at Maulnia in Behar.

(5) Attack on Mr. Banerjee, D.S.P., C.I.D., of U.P.

(6) Embezzlement of Rs. 3,190 – Kailash Pati, an employee in the post office in the district of Gorakhpore was one of the members of the revolutionary party and embezzled Rs. 3190 from the post office on 26-6-28 for the furtherence of the common objects.

(7) Manufacture of Bombs – The members of the conspiracy manufactured bombs at Lahore, Sahranpur, Calcutta and Agra. The factories at Lahore and Saharanpur have since been captured.

The following crimes were discussed and planned but not carried out: (1) To blow up the train carrying the members of the Simon Commission by means of a dynamite. (2) To make arrangements for the escape of Jogesh Chatterjee, a convict in connection with the Kakori case and also of Sachindranath Sanyal, another Kakori convict.

Discussing how the conspiracy was unearthed, Noad said that during the course of investigation of the Dushera festival bomb outrage near Roshani gate, it transpired that two ex-students of the Oriental College had been frequenting the boarding house situated on the first and second floor of Roshani gate where the bomb exploded. As a result of a statement made by one of them, The police for the first time came to know that Bhagat Singh accused, was one of the murderers of Mr. Saunders and Bhagawati Charan was the chief lieutenant in the Punjab.

Shortly before this certain persons had engaged some iron moulders of Lahore to make certain oblong implements

which on enquiry were stated to be parts of a gas machine. The curiosity of local workmen was aroused and they mentioned these facts to a constable of acquaintance. Information passed on the police who instructed their informer to watch the individuals who had given orders and follow them. Sukh Dev was followed to 69, Kashmir bulding, and this house was pointed out to the police and secret enquiry showed that the tenant of the premises was Bhagawati Charan.

In the meantime information from Delhi showed that the bomb which was thrown in the Assembly corresponded closely with the description of the alleged oblong gas machine parts. Careful watch kept on the house eventually resulted in information which led to the raid on 15-4-29 and Sukhdev, Jaigopal and Kishorilal, accused were captured. From the facts disclosed by these accused, the whole history of the revolutionary organisation came to light.

Charges against the accused included murder, abetment of murder, and conspiracy to murder, conspiracy to revolution and other offences against the State, and also offences under Explosive Substances Act.

APPENDIX 14

1. THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE BOMB

MANIFESTO OF THE HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

Introductory

Recent events, particularly the congress resolution on the attempt to blow up the Viceregal Special on the 23rd December 1929, and Gandhi's subsequent writing in 'Young India' clearly show that the Indian National Congress, in conjunction with Gandhi, has launched a crusade against the revolutionaries. A great amount of public criticism both from the press and the platform has been made against them. It is a pity that they have all along been either deliberately or due to sheer ignorance, misrepresented and misunderstood. The revolutionaries do not shun criticism and public scrutiny of their ideals, or actions. They rather welcome these as chances of making those understand, who have a genuine desire to do so, the basic principles of the revolutionary movement and the high and noble ideals that are a perennial source of inspiration and strength to it. It is hoped that this article will help the genaral public to know the revolutionaries as they are and will prevent it from taking them for what interested and ignorant persons would have it believe them to be.

Violence or Non-violence

Let us, first of all, take up the question of violence and non-violence. We think that the use of these terms, in itself, is a grave injustice to either party for they express the ideals of neither of them correctly. Violence is physical force applied for committing injustice, and that is certainly not what the revolutionaries stand for. On the other hand, what generally goes by the name of non-violence is in reality the theory of soul-force, as applied to the attainment of personal and national rights through courting suffering and hoping thus to finally convert your opponent to your point

of view. When a revolutionary believes certain things to be his right, he asks for them, pleads for them, argues for them, wills to attain them with all the soul-force at his command, stands the greatest amount of suffering for them, is always prepared to make the highest sacrifice for their attainment, and also backs his efforts with all the physical force he is capable of. You may coin what other word you like to describe his methods but you cannot call it violence, because that *would* constitute an outrage on the dictionary meaning of that word. Satyagraha is insistance upon Truth. Why press, for the acceptance of Truth, by soul-force alone ? Why not add physical force also to it ? While the revolutionaries stand for winning independence by all the forces, physical as well as moral, at their command, the advocates of soul-force would like to ban the use of physical force. The question really, therefore, is not whether you will have violence or non-violence but whether you will have soul-force plus physical force or soul-force alone.

Our Ideal

The revolutionaries belive that the deliverance of their country will come through Revolution. The Revolution, they are constantly working and hoping for, will not only express itself in the form of an armed confict between the foreign government and its supporters and the people, it will also usher in a New Social Order. The revolution will ring the death knell of Capitalism and class distinctions and privileges. It will bring joy and prosperity to the starving millions who are seething today under the terrible yoke of both foreign and Indian exploitation. It will bring the nation into its own. It will give birth to a new State—a new social order. Above all, it will establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and will for ever banish social parasites from the seat of political power.

Terrorism

The revolutionaries already see the advent of the revolution in the restlessness of youth, in its desire to break free from the mental bondage and religious superstitions that hold

them. As the youth will get more and more saturated with the psychology of revolution, it will come to have a clearer realisation of national bondage and a growing intense, unquenchable thirst for freedom. It will grow, this feeling of bondage, this insatiable desire for freedom, till, in their righteous anger, the infuriated youth will begin to kill the oppressors. Thus has Terrorism been born in the country. It is a phase, a necessary, an inevitable phase of the revolution. Terrorism is not the complete Revolution and the Revolution is not complete without Terrorism. This thesis can be supported by an analysis of any and every revolution in history. Terrorism instils fear in the hearts of the oppressors, it brings hopes of revenge and redemption to the oppressed masses, it gives courage and self-confidence to the wavering, it shatters the spell of the superiority of the ruling class and raises the status of the subject race in the eyes of the world, because it is the most convincing proof of a nation's hunger for freedom. Here in India, as in other countries in the past, Terrorism will develop into the Revolution and the Revolution into Independence, social, political and economic.

Revolutionary Methods

This then is what revolutionaries believe in, this is what they hope to accomplish for their Country They are doing it both openly and secretly and in their own way. The experience of a century long and world-wide struggle between the masses and the governing class, is their guide to their goal and the methods they are following have never been known to have failed.

The Congress and the Revolutionaries

Meanwhile, what has the congress been doing? It has changed its creed from Swaraj to Complete Independence. As a logical sequence to this, one would expect it to declare a war on the British Government. Instead, we find, it has declared war against the Revolutionaries. The first offensive of the Congress came in the form of a resolution deploring the attempt made on the 23rd December 1929, to blow up the Viceroy's special. It was drafted by Gandhi

and he fought tooth and nail for it, with the result, that it was passed by a trifling majority of 81 in a house of 1,713. Was even this bare majority a result of honest political convictions? Let us quote the opinion of Sarla Devi Chaudhrani, who has been a devotee of the Congress all her life, in reply. She says. "I discovered in the course of my conversations with a good many of the Mahatma's followers that it was only their sense of personal loyatly to him that was keeping them back from an expression of their independent views and preventing them from voting against any resolution whatsoever that was fathered by Mahatmaji." As to Gandhi's arguments in favour of his proposition, we will deal with them later, when we discuss his article, "The Cult of the Bomb," which is more or less, an amplification of his speech in the congress. There is one fact about this deplorable resolution which we must not lose sight of, and that is this. Inspite of the fact, that the congress is pledged to non-violence and has been actively engaged in carrying on propaganda in its favour for the last ten years, and, inspite of the fact also, that the supporters of the resolution indulged in abuse, called the revolutionaries 'cowards' and described their actions as 'dastardly' – and one of them even threateningly remarked, that if they wanted to be led by Gandhi, they should pass this resolution without any opposition – inspite of all this, the resolution could only be adopted by a dangerously narrow majority. That demonstrates, beyond the shadow of a doubt, how solidly the country is backing the revolutionaries. In a way Gandhi deserved our thanks for having brought the question up for discussion and thus having shown to the world at large that even the congress – that stronghold of non-violence – is at least as much, if not more, with the revolutionaries than with him.

Gandhi on War Path

Having achieved a victory which cost him more than a defeat, Gandhi has returned to the attack in his article "The Cult of the Bomb". We will give it our closest attention before proceeding further. That article consists of three things, his faith, his opinion and his arguments. We will

not discuss what is a matter of faith with him because reason has little in common with faith. Let us then take such of his opinions as are backed by arguments and his arguments proper, against what he calls violence and discuss them one by one.

Do the Masses believe in non-violence?

He thinks that on the basis of his experience during his latest tour in the country, ee is right in believing that the large masses of Indian humanity are yet untouched by the spirit of violence and that non-violence has come to stay as a political weapon. Let him not delude himself on the experiences of his latest tour in the country. Though it is true that the average leader confines his tours to places where only the mail train can conveniently land him, while Gandhi has extended his tour limit to where a motor car can take him, the practice, of staying only with the richest people in the places visited, of spending most of his time on being complimented by his devotees in private and public and of granting Darshan, now and then, to the illiterate masses, whom he claims to understand so well, disqualifies him from claiming to know the mind of the masses. No man can claim to know a people's mind by seeing them from the public platform and giving them Darshan and' Updesh. He can at the most claim to have told the masses what he thinks about things. Has Gandhi, during recent years mixed in the social life of the masses ? Has he sat with the peasant round the evening fire and tried to know what he thinks ? Has he passed a single evening in the company of a factory labourer and shared with him his woes ? We have, and therefore we claim to know what the masses think. We assure Gandhi, that the average Indian, like the average human being understands little of the fine theological niceties about 'Ahinsa' and 'loving one's enemy'. The way of the world is like this. You have a friend ; you love him, sometimes so much that you even die for him. You have an enemy, you shun him, you fight against him and if possible, kill him. The gospel of the revolutionaries is simple and straight. It is what it has been since the days of Adam and Eve and no man has any difficulty about understanding it. We affirm

that the masses of India are solidly with us because we know it from personal experience. The day is not far off when they will flock *in their thousands* to work *the will of the* Revolution.

The Gospel of Love

Gandhi declares that his faith in the efficacy of non-violence has increased. That is to say, he believes more and more that through his gospel of love and self-imposed suffering, he hopes someday to convert the foreign rulers to his way of thinking. Now, he has devoted his whole life to the preaching of his wonderful gospel and has practised it with unwavering constance, as few others have done. Will he let the world know how many enemies of India he has been able to turn into friends ? How many O'Dwyers, Readings and Irwins has he been able to convert into friends of India ? If none, how can India be expected to share his growing faith that he will be able to persuade or compel England to agree to Indian Independence through the practice of non-violence.

What would have happened

If the bomb, that burst under the Viceroy's special, had exploded properly, one of the two things suggested by Gandhi would have surely happened. The Viceroy would have either been badly injured or killed. Under such circumstances there certainly would have been no meeting between the leaders of political parties and the Viceroy. The uncalled for and undignified attempt on the part of these individuals, to lower the national prestige by knocking at the gates of the Government House with the beggar's bowl in their hands and Dominion status on their lips, inspite of the clear terms of the Calcutta Ultimatum, would have been checkmated and the nation would have been the better off for that. If, fortunately, the explosion had been powerful enough to kill the Viceroy, one more enemy of India would have met a well deserved doom. The author of the Meerut prosecutions and the Lahore and Bhusawal persecutions can appear a friend of India only to the enemies of her Freedom. Inspite of Gandhi and the Nehrus and their claims to political sagacity and

statesmanship, Irwin has succeeded in shattering the unity between different political parties in the country, that had resulted from the boycott of the Simon Commisson. Even the congress today is a house divided against itself. Who else except the Viceroy and his olive tongue, have we to thank for our grave misfortunes ? And yet there exist people in our country who proclaim him a Friend of India !

The Future of the Congress

There might be those who have no regard for the congress and hope nothing from it. If Gandhi thinks that the revolutionaries belong to that category, he wrongs them grievously. They fully realise the part played by the congress in awakening, among the ignorant masses, a keen desire for freedom. They expect great things of it in the future. Though they hold firmly to their opinion, that so long as persons like Sen Gupta, whose wonderful intelligence compels him to discern the hand of the C. I. D. in the late attempt to blow up the Viceroy's Special, and persons like Ansari, who think abuse the better part of argument and know so little of politics as to make the ridiculous and fallacious assertion that no nation had achieved freedom by the Bomb, have a determining voice in the affairs of the congress, the country can help little from it, they are hopefully looking forward to the day, when the mania of non-violence would have passed away from the congress, and it would march arm in arm with the revolutionaries to their common goal of Complete Independence. This year it has accepted the ideal which the revolutionaries have preached and lived upto for more than a quarter of a century. Let us hope the next year will see it endorse their methods also.

Violence and Military Expenditure

Gandhi is of opinion that as often as violence has been practised in the country, it has resulted in an increase of military expenditure. If his reference is to revolutionary activities during the last twenty-five years we dispute the accuracy of his statement and challenge him to prove his statement with facts and figures. If, on the other hand, he had the wars that have taken place in India since the British

came here in mind, our reply is that even his modest experiment in Ahinsa and Satyagrah which had little to compare in it with the wars for independence, produced its effect on the finances of the Bureaucracy. Mass action, whether violent or non-violent, whether successful or unsuccessful, is bound to produce the same kind of repercussions on the finances of a state.

The Reforms

Why should Gandhi mix up the revolutionaries with the various constitutional reforms granted by the government? They never cared or worked for the Minto Reforms, Montague Reforms and the like. These the British Government threw before the constitutionalist agitators to lure them away from the right path. This was the bribe paid to them for their support to the government in its policy of crushing and uprooting the revolutionaries. These toys – as Gandhi call them – were sent to India for the benefit of those, who, from time to time, raised the cry of 'Home Rule', 'Self-Government', 'Responsible Government', 'Full Responsible Government', 'Dominion Status' and such other constitutional names for slavery. The revolutionaries never claim the Reforms as their achievements. They raised the standard of independence long ago. They have lived for it. They have ungrudgingly laid their lives down for the sake of this ideal. They claim that their sacrifices have produced a tremendous change in the mentality of the people. That their efforts have advanced the country a long way on the road to Independence, is granted by even those who do not see eye to eye with them in politics.

The Way of Progress

As to Gandhi's contention that violence impedes the march of progress and thus directly postpones the day of freedom, we can refer him to so many contemporary instances where violence has led to the social progress and political freedom of the people who practised it. Take the case of Russia and Turkey for example. In both countries the party for progress took over the state organisation through an armed revolution. Yet social progress and political freedom has

not been impeded. Legislation, backed by force, has made the masses go 'double march' on the road of progress. The solitary example of Afghanistan cannot establish a political formula. It is rather the exception that proves the rule.

Failure of Non-Co-operation

Gandhi is of opinion that the great awakening in the people, during the days of non-co-operation, was a result of the preaching of non-violence. It is wrong to assign to non-violence the widespread awakening of the masses which in fact, is manifested wherever a programme of direct action is adopted. In Russia, for intance, there came about widespread awakening among the peasants and workers, when the communists launched forth their great programme of militant Mass Action, though nobody preached non-violence to them. We will even go further and state that it was mainly the mania for non-violence and Gandhi's compromise mentality that brought about the disruption of the forces that had come together at the call of Mass Action. It is claimed that non-violence can be used as a weapon for righting political wrongs. To say the least, it is a novel idea, yet untried. It failed to achieve what were considered to be the just rights of Indians in South Africa. It failed to bring 'Swaraj within a year' to the Indian masses inspite of the untiring labours of an army of national workers and one and a quarter crores of rupees. More recently, it failed to win for the Bardoli peasants what the leaders of the Satyagraha movement had promised them – the famous irreducible minimum of Gandhi and Patel. We know of no other trials non-violence has had on a country-wide scale. Up to this time, non-violence has been blessed with one result – Failure. Little wonder then, that the country refuses to give it another trial. In fact Satyagraha as preached by Gandhi is a form of agitation – a protest, leading up invariably, as has already been seen, to a compromise. It can hardly be of any use to a nation striving for national independence which can never come as the result of a compromise. The sooner we recognise, that there can be no compromise between independence and slavery, the better.

IS IT NEW ERA ?

'We are entering upon a new era' thinks Gandhi. The mere act of defining swaraj as Complete Independence, this technical change in the congress constituiton, can hardly constitute a new era. It will be a great day indeed when the congress will decide upon a countrywide programme of Mass Action, based on well recognised revolutionary principles. Till then the unfurling of the flag of Independence is a mockery and we concur with the following remarks of Sarla Devi Chaudharani, which she recently made, in a press interview.

"The unfurling of the Flag of Independence", she says "at just one minute after midnight of the 31st December 1929 was too stagy for words—just as the G.O C. and others in gaudy uniforms were card board Grand Officers Commanding."

"The fact that the unfurling of the flag of Independence lay hanging in the balance till midnight of that date, and that the scales might have been turned at even the eleventh hour fifty-ninth minute had a message from the Viceroy or the Secretary of State come to the Congress granting Dominion Status, *proves that Independence is not a heart hunger of the leaders* but that the declaration of it is only like a petulant child's retort. It would have been a worhty action to the Indian National Congress if Independence was achieved first and declared afterwards." It is true that the congress orators will henceforth harangue the masses on Complete Independence instead of Dominion Status. They will call upon the people to prepare for a struggle in which one party is to deliver blows and the other is simply to receive them, till beaten and demoralised beyond hope of recovery ! Can such a thing be named a struggle and can it ever lead the country to Complete Independence? It is all very well to hold fast to the highest ideal worthy of a nation, but it is none the less necessary to adopt the best, the most efficacious and tried means, to achieve it ere you become the laughing stock of the whole world.

NO BULLYING PLEASE

Gandhi has called upon all those who are not past reason to withdraw their support from the revolutionaries and condemn their actions so that 'our deluded patriots may, for want of nourishment to their violent spirit, realise the futility of violence and the great harm that violent activities have every time done.' How easy and convenient it is to call people deluded, to declare them to be past reason, to call upon the public to withdraw its support and condemn them so that they may get isolated and be forced to suspend their activities, specially when a man holds the confidence of an influential section of the public! It is a pity that Gandhi does not and will not understand revolutionary psychology inspite of his life-long experience of public life. Life is a precious thing. It is dear to every one. If a man becomes a revolutionary, if he goes about with his life in the hollow of his hand ready to sacrifice it at any moment, he does not do so merely for the fun of it. He does not risk his life merely because sometimes, when the crowd is in a sympathetic mood, it cries 'Bravo' in appreciation. He does it because his reason forces him to take that course, because his conscience forces him to take that course, because his conscience dictates it A revolutionary believes in reason more than anything. It is to reason, and reason alone, that he bows. No amount of abuse and condemnation, even if it emanates from the highest of the high, can turn him from his set purpose. To think, that a revolutionary will give up his ideals if public support and appreciation is withdrawn from him, is the highest folly. Many a revolutionary has, ere now, stepped on to the scaffold and laid his life down for the cause, regardless of the curses that the constitutionalist agitators rained plentifully upon him. If you will have the revolutionaries suspend their activities, reason with them squarely. That is the one and the only way. For the rest let there be no doubt in anybody's mind. A revolutionary is the last person on earth to submit to bullying.

AN APPEAL

We take this opportunity to appeal to our countrymen – to the youth, to the workers and peasants, to the revolutionary

intelligentsia – to come forward and join us in carrying aloft the banner of freedom. Let us establish a new order of society in which political and economic exploitation will be an impossibility. In the name of those gallant men and women, who willingly accepted death so that we, their descendants, may lead a happier life, who toiled ceaselessly and perished for the poor, the famished, and exploited millions of India, we call upon every patriot to take up the fight in all seriousness. Let nobody toy with the nation's freedom, which is her very life, by making psychological experiments in non-violence and such other novelties. Our slavery is our shame. When shall we have courage and wisdom enough to be able to shake ourselves free of it? What is our great heritage of civilisation and culture worth if we have not enough self-respect left in us to prevent us from bowing surveillance to the commands of foreigners and paying homage to their flag and king ?

VICTORY OR DEATH

There is no crime that Britain has not committed in India. Deliberate misrule has reduced us to paupers, has 'bled us white'. As a race and a people we stand dishonoured and outraged. Do people still expect us to forget and to forgive? We shall have our revenge – a people's righteous revenge on the Tyrant. Let cowards fall back and cringe for compromise and peace. We ask not for mercy and we give no quarter. Ours is a war to the end–to Victory or Death.

Long live revolution !

Kartar Singh,
President,
Hindustan Socialist Republican Association.

2. THE HINDUSTAN SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION

MANIFESTO

"THE FOOD ON WHICH THE TENDER PLANT OF LIBERTY THRIVES IS THE BLOOD OF THE MARTYR"

For decades this life blood to the plant of India's liberty is being supplied by revolutionaries. There are few to question

the magnanimity of the noble ideals they cherish and the grand sacrifices they have offered, but their normal activities being mostly secret the country is in dark as to their present policy and intentions. This has necessitated the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association to issue this manifesto.

This association stands for Revolution in India in order to liberate her from foreign domination by means of organised armed rebellion. Open rebellion by a subject people must always in the nature of things be preceded by secret propaganda and secret preparations. Once a country enters that phase the task of an alien Government becomes impossible. It might linger on for a number of years but its fate is sealed. Human nature, with all its prejudices and conservatism, has a sort of instinctive dread for Revolution. Upheavals have always been a terror to holders of power and privilege Revolution is a phenomenon which nature loves and without which there can be no progress either in nature or in human affairs. Revolution is certainly not unthinking, brutal campaign of murder and incendiarism ; it is not a few bombs thrown here and a few shots fired there ; neither it is a movement meant to destroy all remnants of civilization and blow to pieces time-honoured principles of Justice and Equity. Revolution is not a philosophy of despair or a creed of desperadoes. Revolution may be *anti*-God but is certianly not *anti*-Man. It is a vital, living force which is indicative of eternal conflict between the Old and the New, between Life and Living Death, between Light and Darkness. There is no concord, no symphony, no rhythm without revolution. 'The music of the spheres' of which poets have sung, would remain an unreality if a ceaseless Revolution were to be eliminated from the space. Revolution is Law. Revolution is Order and Revolution is the Truth.

The youths of our Nation have realized this Truth. They have learnt painfully the lesson that without Revolution there is no possibility of enthroning Order, Law and Love in place of chaos and Legal Vandalism and Hatred which are reigning supreme today. Let no one, in this blessed land of ours, run with the idea that the youths are irresponsible. They know where they stand. None knows better, than their own selves, that

their path is not strewn with roses. From time to time they have paid a fairly decent price for their Ideals. It does not, therefore, lie in the mouth of anybody to say that youthful impetuosity has feasted upon platitudes. It is no good to hurl denunciatory epithets at our Ideology. It is enough to know that our ideas are sufficiently active and powerful to drive us on, aye, even to gallows.

It has become a fashion these days to indulge in wild and meaningless talk of non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi is great and we mean no disrespect to him if we express our emphatic disapproval of the methods advocated by him for our country's emancipation. We would be ungrateful to him if we do not salute him for the immense awakening that has been brought about by his non-co-operation movement in the country. But to us the Mahatma is an impossible visionary. Non-violence may be a noble Ideal, but is a thing of the morrow. We can, situated as we are, never hope to win our freedom by mere non-violence. The world is armed to the very teeth. And the world is too much with us. All talk of peace may be sincere, but we, of the slave Nation, cannot, and must not, be led away by such false Ideology. What Logic, we ask, is there in asking the country to traverse a non-violent path when the world atmosphere is surcharged with violence and exploitation of the weak ? We declared with all the emphasis we can command that the youths of the Nation cannot be lured by such mid-summer-night's dream.

We believe in violence, not as an end in itself but as a means to a Noble End. And the votaries of non-violence, as also the advocates of caution and circumspection will readily grant this much at least that we know how to suffer for, and to act upto, our convictions. Shall we here recount all these sacrifices which our comrades have offered at the altar of our common Mother ? Many a heart-rending and soul-stirring scene has been enacted inside the four walls of His Majesty's Prison : We have been taken to task for our Terroristic Policy. Our answer is that terrorism is never the object of revolutionaries, nor do they believe that terrorism alone can bring independence. No doubt the revolutionaries think, and rightly, that

it is only by resorting to terrorism alone that they can find a most effiective means of retaliation. The British Government exists, because the Britishers have been successful in terrorising the whole of India. How are we to meet this official terrorism? Only counter-terrorism on the part of revolutionaries can checkmate effectively this bureaucratic bullying. A feeling of utter helplessness pervades society. How can we overcome this fatal despondency ? It is only by infusing a real spirit of sacrifice that lost self-confidence can be restored. Terrorism has its international aspect also. Englands's enemies, which are many, are drawn towards us by effective demonstration of our strength. That in itself is a great advantage.

India is writhing under the yoke of imperialism. Her teeming millions are today a helpless prey to poverty and ignorance. Foreign domination and economic exploitation have unmanned the vast majority of the people who constitute the workers and peasants of India. The position of the Indian Proletariat is, today, extremely critical. It has a double danger to face. It has to bear the onslaught of Foreign Capitalism on one hand and the treacherous attack of Indian Capital on the other. The latter is showing a progressive tendency to join forces with the former The leaning of certain politicians in favour of Dominion Status shows clearly which way the wind blows. Indian Capital is preparing to betray the masses into the hands of Foreign Capitalism and receive as a price of this betrayal, a little share in the Government of the country. The hope of the proletariat is, therefore, now centred in Socialism which alone can lead to the establishment of Complete Independence and the removal of all social distinctions and privileges.

The future of India rests with the youths. They are the salt of the earth. Their promptness to suffer, their daring courage and their radiant sacrifice prove that India's future in their hands is perfectly safe. In a moment of realization the late Deshbandhu Das said, "The youths are at once the hope and glory of the Motherland. Theirs is the inspiration behind the movement. Theirs is the sacrifice. Theirs is the victory. They are torch bearers on the road to Freedom. They are the pilgrims on the road to Liberty."

Youths-ye-soldiers of the Indian Republic, fall in ! Do not stand easy, do not let your knees tremble. Shake off the paralysing effects of long lethargy. Yours is a noble Misson. Go out into every nook and corner of the country and prepare the ground for future Revolution which is sure to come. Respond to the clarion call of duty. Do not vegetate. Grow ! Every minute of your life you must think of devising means so that this your ancient land may arise with flaming eyes and fierce yawn! Sow the seeds of disgust and hatred against British Imperialism in the fertile minds of your fellow youths. And the seeds shall grow a jungle of sturdy trees, because you shall water the seeds with your warm blood. Then a grim and terrible earthquake having a universally destructive potentiality shall inevitably come along with portentous rumblings, and this edifice of Imperialism will crash and crumble to dust, and great shall be the fall thereof. And then and not till then, a new Indian Nation shall arise and surprise humanity with the splendour and glory all its own. The wise and the mighty shall be bewildered by the simple and the weak.

Individual liberty shall be safe. The sovereignty of the proletariat, shall be recognised. We court the advent of such Revolution. Long live Revolution ! ! !

Kartar Singh,
President.

Circulated at the Lahore Congress in December 1929.

[From *Terrorism in India : 1917–1936*]

APPENDIX 15

THE CHITTAGONG LEAFLETS

1. TO THE PEOPLE OF CHITTAGONG :

The Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, hereby solemnly declares its intention to stand today against the agelong repression by the British people and their Government which they have followed as a cruel policy to keep the three hundred millions of Indian people subjugated for unlimited time and to eradicate the slightest trace of nationalism and their national originality amongst them

The right of ownership of India and the control of her destiny belongs to the people of India only and the long usurpation of the right by a foreign people and Government has not extinguished that right nor it ever CAN.

The Indian Republican Army proclaims today the intention of asserting this right in arms in face of the world and thus put into actual practice the idea of Indian Independence declared by the Indian National Congress ; and hereby pledges the life of everyone of its members to the cause of freedom, to the welfare and exaltation of the Mother Land amongst all other nations.

It remembers today with sorrowful indignation the inhuman massacre of the Indian people perpetrated by the British Government on the Indian soil, the blowing up of her womanfolk in the mouth of Guns, the indiscriminate hangings and cold-blooded murders of her manhood, the crushing of her infants under the cruel British foot and the complete destruction of her trade and industries and takes up the sacred vow of retaliating and avenging the blood of her late wronged children.

The Indian Republican Army is entitled to, and hereby claims the allegiance of, every Indian people for the upkeep of

the national cause and honour and also prays that no person who reveres this cause will dishonour it by callousness, cowardice and inhumanity. In this supreme hour the Chittagong people must, by their valour and patriotism and by the readiness of her children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove themselves worthy of the august destiny to which they are called.

By order

President in Council

INDIAN REPUBLICAN ARMY,

Chittagong Branch.

2. TO THE STUDENTS AND YOUTH OF CHITTAGONG :

Dear Brothers,

The Indian Republican Army has made an attempt to assert its rightful claim to liberate the country from the cruel yoke and oppression of the British people and their Government and has kept up flying the ensign of free India.

The British Government during the last 200 years of their tyrannical reign in India, have crushed with very cruel hands the Indians everytime they have tried to achieve freedom, and this time also they will not spare any energy to restore their illegal establishment for predatory exploitation.

So brothers, rise up to the situation, try to feel the anguish of subjugation, see to the sad plights your country has been put to, do what the youths and students of Germany, Russia and China are doing, kindle up the fire of wrath and retaliation in your hearts. Enroll yourselves as soldiers under the Indian Republican Army and make an ardent attempt to save the Motherland from the abyss of misfortune and misery.

By order

President in Council,

INDIAN REPUBLICAN ARMY,

Chittagong Branch.

3. TO THE CITIZENS OF CHITTAGONG :

The Indian Republican Army hereby directs and commands every man, woman and son of Chittagong to capture and produce dead or alive forthwith at the Head Quarters of the Army all Englishmen and white-skinned Anglo-Indians who are hostile to our national aspirations.

The Indian Republican Army announces that everybody who will produce the demanded persons will be amply rewarded.

By order
President in Council,

INDIAN REPUBLICAN ARMY,
Chittagong Branch.

(The above three leaflets are taken verbatim from the Chittagong Uprising Golden Jubilee Souvenir, 1980–81, Calcutta, with grateful acknowledgements. There is a slightly different version of the third leaflet in the secret Intelligence Report, *Terrorism in India : 1917–36,* which we are reproducing' below–IMS.)

EXTRACT FROM PAGES 244–245, VOLUME I, OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE COURT OF SPECIAL TRIBUNAL, CHITTAGONG.

The Indian Republican Army, Chittagong Branch, hereby declares today the lives of all Englishmen and white-skinned Anglo-Indians who are prejudicial to the interest of Indian freedom, forfeited to it. It also entreats all the members of The Indian Republican Army and the people of Chittagong to begin a vigorous campaign of murdering these people wherever found to avenge the murders of their forefathers and thus to relieve the country of the pernicious exploitations which they are doing in this land of OURS.

The Indian Republican Army further declares that any person who will be able to produce any Englishman, woman or child of any age to its headquarters, dead or alive, will be amply rewarded.

By order
President in Council,

INDIAN REPUBLICAN ARMY,
Chittagong Branch.

APPENDIX 16

THE BENGAL POLICE ADMINISTRATION REPORT, 1931.

The following is an interesting review of the history of terrorism as contained in the Report of the Police Administration of Bengal, 1931, and which the Governor-in-Counci "strongly recommends for perusal by the public" :–

From 1907 to the end of 1914 there were 125 outrages in Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam. This figure includes outrages committed in Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam before the repartition and in Bengal after the repartition. The average monthly number of outrages during this period was 1.3. (The word "outrage" is used to mean only murder, dacoity, robbery, or an attempt to commit one of these crimes).

In 1915 up to May 3rd, 15 outrages were committed, or 50 per cent more than the yearly average for the previous eight years, clearly showing that the terrorist organisations had been unaffected by the steps taken against them up to that time under the existing law. In May 1915, Section 12 (a) of the rules framed under Section 2 of the Defence of India Act was brought into use against terrorists.

At this time their strength was practically unimpaired by the few convictions that had been obtained under the ordinary law. The police had the whole force of the terrorist organisation, provincial leaders, district leaders, group leaders and ordinary members to combat. The rule was applied to 263 persons only upto June 1916 and terrorist crime continued to increase. During this period of 14 months 38 outrages occurred in course of which 20 persons were murdered by terrorists and the monthly averages was 2.7.

These outrages culminated in the murder of Babu Basanta Kumar Chatterjee, Deputy Superintendent of the Intelligence Branch, in June 1916. Thereafter, terrorists of all degrees of importance, from leaders who dictated the policy down to minor members, were interned and from June 1916 to November 1919 when internments stopped, 1,029 persons were interned. The result of this vigorous campaign was that by the end of June 1918, up to which time for the previous 12 years there had been on an average 17 outrages annually, terrorist outrages almost ceased. There were only 2 more up to the end of 1919 and none in 1920.

The release under the Amnesty of the 1,262 persons interned under the Defence of India Act began in December 1919 and finished by February 1920. Though the terrorist parties had received a paralysing blow by the internments under the Defence of India Act and the 120 arrests under Regulation III of 1818, nevertheless they immediately began to reorganise their parties, and exploited to the utmost the non-co-operation movement for the purpose of recruitment. The year 1921 was free from terrorist outrages but in 1922 one outrage, a murder, occurred.

In 1923 a fresh series of terrorist outrages began. The Defence of India Act had expired six months after the end of the Great War and although, as a result of the Sedition Commitee's report, the Rowlatt Bill, after slight modifications, became law as the Revolutionary and Anarchical Crimes Act, 1919, this Act was never brought into force, and was repealed with the other so-called repressive laws in 1921. In 1923, therefore, the terrorists could be dealt with only by the ordinary law and Regulation III of 1818. By September 1923 the imminence of further outrages, including the assassination of certain high officials, had become so menacing that 11 persons, believed to be the leaders of the conspiracy, were made State prisoners under Regulation III. An attempt to prosecute under the ordinary law in the Alipore Conspiracy Case some other persons, suspected to have been concerned in the armed dacoities which had occurred in Calcutta, failed.

In January 1924, Mr Day was murdered by a terrorist in mistake for Sir Charles Tegart. This outrage was followed by the arrest of six more persons under Regulation III of 1818. Nevertheless further outrages were planned and committed and the situation became so serious that special legislation in the form of an Ordinance was promulgated in October 1924, and 76 suspects were arrested and interned. The powers conferred by this Ordinance were limited in scope, for it provided for the arrest and internment of only those terrorists who had committed, were committing, or were about to commit, certain specified acts or offences. It did not empower the Government to intern any person who was reasonably believed to be a member of a terrorist party.

The sudden action under the Ordinance was a blow to the terrorists who had not recovered from that dealt to them by the arrests under the Defence of India Act. Many of the leaders decided in 1925 to give up committing outrages for a period in order to reorganise and strengthen their parties. One party decided to wait for five years, the period, for which the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 which had replaced the Ordinance, would remain in force.

The members of other groups, however, disapproved of this waiting policy and formed an organisation for the immediate resumption of terrorism, and it was against this organisation that the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925 was almost exclusively applied. The timely raids at Dakshineswar and Seva Bazar Street in 1925 resulted in the conviction of most of the important leaders and exposed their plans and the party handicapped by this reserve was unable to develop. The opposition of many terrorist leaders to the policy of this party was also a hindrance both to recruitment and to the replacement of arrested leaders. The discomfiture of the party was completed by the continued arrests under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act and the searches and arrests in 1927 which culminated in the institution of the Deoghar Conspiracy Case.

Between October 1924 and the end of 1928 one person only was murdered by the terrorists. The total number of

persons interned under the 1924 Ordinance and the 1925 Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act was 187, the last being arrested in March, 1927. All these persons and those made State prisoners under Regulation III of 1818 were released by the end of January 1929, the majority being released in 1928.

In 1929 terrorist outrages increased, four being committed, of which the murder of a police officer in Barisal and a dacoity in the Rajshahi district were the most important. The dacoity was the first overt act of an amalgamation of terrorist groups formed under similar circumstances to the amalgamated party of 1925. At the end of the year searches were made in Calcutta and elsewere which exposed its objects and resulted in the institution of the Mechuabazar Street Bomb Conspiracy Case and the temporary disablement of the party. In April 1930, just after the expiry of the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1925, the Chittagong party brought off the Chittagong raids which gave great impetus to the terrorist movement throughout the province. The outrages committed in 1930 amounted to 36 only, one of which occurred before April. In these outrages 19 persons were murdered by the terrorists.

At the time of the Chittagong armoury raids the Government possessed no special powers to deal with the terrorist menace except Regulation III The Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925 had expired on the 21st March, 1930. Immediately after the Chittagong raid, the powers of arrest and detention including those in the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1925, were repromulgated by an Ordinance, and on the 16th October were made law as the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1930, for a period of five years.

From April 1930 up to the end of the year, 991 persons were arrested under the ordinance and the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, of whom 818 were interned and 173 released.

The year 1931 was one of continuous anxiety. The terrorists had extended their organisations enormously among the Hindu "bhadralok" youths who had been so inured by the press and platform campaign waged by the Congress

against Government and the British and encouraged to break laws by the Civil Disobedience Movement and excited by the terrorist outrages of 1930, that it became increasingly difficult to check terrorism with the Special Powers conferred by the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1930.

During 1931, 67 terrorist outrages occurred, the monthly incident being :– January – 5 ; February – 2 ; March – 8 ; April – 7 ; May – 6 ; June – 3 ; July – 6 ; August – 5 ; September – 5 ; October – 11 ; November – 4 ; December – 5.

Nine persons were murdered. The continuance of outrages proved that the powers conferred by the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1930 were insufficient. On the 15th October, the Bengal Ordinance IX of 1931 were promulgated by which the scope of the Act was widened, so that action could also be taken against all members and helpers of terrorist associations, thus conferring powers similar to those which were used with success against the terrorists in 1916. Whether these powers will have the effect of stamping out terrorism at least temporarily, has yet to be seen. It took from June 1916 to June 1918 before the exercise of such powers produced this effect in the first terrorist campaign.

The terrorist cult has found more votaries in the last two years than ever before. This is due largely to the propaganda against the Government and the British which has been carried on for so long from the Congress platform and press. This propaganda has included the glorification of assassins, the palliation of their crimes by specious arguments about noble motives, all calculated to encourage the youth of the country to emulate their crimes. All deterrent sentences passed on terrorists are decried and nothing to stem the stream of murders committed by them is advocated. Every acquittal is hailed with delight and anything that comes out in favour of an accused terrorist is printed in heavy types.

To the authors of this propaganda may be attributed the responsibility for the descent in Hindu "bhadralok" girls to deeds of cowardly assassination. The participation of women in the terrorist conspiracy is no new development, but until 1931 they had not stooped to assassination.

The outstanding feature of the year was the general spirit of lawlessness engendered by the civil disobedience movement started in 1930. In addition, the extension of the terrorist organizations coupled with the unfavourable economic conditions made the year one of great anxiety to the police, upon whom, although the reserve forces were temporarily strengthened, and additional police were quartered in disturbed areas, a severe strain was imposed both in town and mufassil. In this connection it may be mentioned here that, including the rural police no less than 140 members of the force received injuries and 6 (including an inspector) were killed in the execution of their duty.

It will be seen that in a year of exceptional difficulty, discipline and efficiency were well maintained .. ... Turning to the criminal administration, the report shows that while there has been a decrease of 4,544 in the total volume of cognizable cases reported under classes I–V, the number of true cases of "serious" crime increased by 389. The increase in dacoity was abnormal. Altogether 2,205 cases of dacoities were reported of which 1929 (including the pending cases of the previous year) were declared true as against 1,103 in 1930. Economic distress and widespread unemployment drove those in want to crime, while civil disobedience engendered a contempt of authority, encouraged lawlessness, and absorbed the activity of the police. The district police received material help from the Criminal Investigation Department in their efforts to combat the outbreak of dacoities. In spite of the difficult situation, every effort was made to deal with outbreaks of serious crime, but success in this direction depends greatly on the co-operation given by the general public who, as stated in the previous report, have shown marked reluctance to assist the police Most of the village defence parties remained inactive during the year.

GLOSSARY

Abhinav Bharat	:	New India – Abhinav = quite new, recent, up-to-date.
Ahimsah Paramo-dharmah	:	Non-violence is the best (supreme) law (or virtue, moral duty).
aisa na ho ki phansi ruk jai (p. 237).	:	Let it not so happen that the hangings are stopped.
Anushilan	:	Contemplation, repeated study.
Arjuna	:	(White) – One of the five Pandava princes, whose paternity is mythically ascribed to Indra.
Ashram	:	A sort of monastic retreat. A phase (or stage) of life. There are four phases of life according to the Brahmanic religion.
Athmonnati	:	Progress (or development) of self (soul).
Badmash	:	Wicked or immoral person, a hooligan.
Baisakhi day	:	Baisakh is the second month of the Hindu year. Baisakhi day marks the onset of this month. It is a holy and auspicious day for the N. Indian Hindus (more so for the Sikhs) and generally falls on April 13.
Bakr–Id	:	A Mohammedan festival.
Bartman Rananiti	:	Current military wisdom (strategy & tactics).
Bandi jivan	:	A Prison(er's) life.
Bhabi	:	Sister-in-law – one's elder brother's wife.
Bhagavad Githa	:	'The Song Celestial.' A celebrated episode of the Maha-bharata, in the form of a metrical dialogue, in which the divine Krishna is the chief speaker, and

		expounds to Arjuna his philosophical doctrines. A most sacred verse for the Hindus.
Bharat Mata	:	Mother India.
Bharat Sevak Sangha	:	Servants of India Association.
Bhakti, Karma and Jnana Yogas	:	Three Yogas (techniques of achieving bodily and mental harmony) for the salvation of the soul. Bhakti = Devotion or worship, Karma = deeds (good deeds to fulfil one's duty and done without the desire for the fruit), Jnana = Knowledge (striving for), are the three yogas.
Bhawani Mandir	:	Temple of the Goddess Bhawani (an incarnation of *Adishakti* – the primeval and supreme female Goddess).
Brahma	:	The Creator-God among the trinity (of *Brahma-Vishnu-Maheshwara)*.
Brahmacharins	:	Celebates in the first stage of life *(brahmacharya)*. According to the Hindu brahmanic tradition a person ought to undergo four stages of life *(Ashrams)*: 1. *Brahmacharya* (religious studentship maintaining celibacy) ; 2. *Grihastha* (house-holder maintaining a family) ; 3. *Vanaprastha* (retirement in forests) ; and 4. *Sannyasa* (the stage of total renunciation).
Chandan	:	Sandalwood.
darsan	:	sight, view, appearance,
Desh Bhagat (Qaidi) Parwar Sahayak Committee	:	The Committee to help Patriotic (prisoners') families.
Dharma	:	religious and moral duty, law, ethics – A system of life combining the codes of law and ethics.
di	:	A suffix for sister ; e.g. Sushiladi–Sister Sushila.

Diskha	:	Devotion; (also initiation, consecration).
Do–aba	:	The land between the two rivers. Likewise, Punjab – the land between five rivers.
Dusserah	:	The last day festival of a series of ten days festivals celebrated with gusto by the Hindus.
Faqir	:	Muslim itinerant priest.
Fituri	:	A rebellion – from Pithuri (Telugu) meaning literally a complaint (usually that which brews and circulates clandestinely). Used by British Government officers to denote a conspiracy, treason or a rebellion thereof.
Girijans	:	Hill–people.
Gol mal	:	Hotch–potch, disturbance.
Gurudwara	:	A Sikh temple.
Halal and *Jhatka*	:	*Halal* is to slaughter (the animal) according to Islamic rituals. The throat of the animal is only cut upto half (not completely severed) and it is left to bleed to death. *Jhatka* is to slaughter by having the head (of the animal) cut off by a single stroke. This only is held (by tradition) to be lawful and acceptable for the Hindus to eat.
Hartal	:	A strike; The complete closure of shops and establishments, and other commercial and productive activities in a village/town/city.
Hindustani Samyavadi Sangha	:	Indian Socialist Association.
Holi	:	A great Hindu festival observed on the last day of the bright half of Phalgun. A joyous festival with a riotous sprinkling of colours.

Inquilab Zindabad	:	Longlive (zindabad) Revolution (Inquilab) !
Janaka	:	An ancient sage–king of Mithila in North India – Father of Sita (Janaki) and father–in–law of Lord Rama.
Jatha	:	A band of devoted (or fanatic) Sikhs.
Jehad or Jihad	:	Holy War (Crusade) – A communal war waged by muslims against the Unbelievers or other non–muslims.
Jhatka	:	See *halal.*
Juganthar	:	Yuganthar = The transitional period between epochs; use to mean a New Era also.
Kali	:	The black goddess – the fierce and bloody consort of Siva.
Kshatriya	:	One among the four varnas (chaturvarna) of the Brahmanic religion; the fighting caste.
Koyas	·	A hill-tribe, mostly to be found in the forest regions of Andhra Pradesh.
Krishna	:	(The Black) – is the most celebrated hero of Indian mythology, and most popular of all the deities. He is said to be the eighth *Avatara* (incarnation) of *Vishnu.*
Lokah samastah sukhinobhavathu	:	Let all the people be safe and happy.
Mujahid	:	One who fights a *Jehad,* a crusader.
Mahant	:	The head of a monastery, an abbot.
Mahatma	:	great soul.
Masjid	:	mosque.
Mitra Mela	:	A fair of friends.
Mofussil	:	The suburbs of a town.

Mutta, muttadar	:	From the Telugu word, *muttah* – a group or a faction. Muttadars were revenue farmers (and not cultivators of land) appointed by the British rulers over the jurisdiction of a muttah (group of villages).
Naujawan Bharat Sabha	:	Young India Society (or Assembly).
Panchajanya	:	The name of Lord Krishna's conch.
Panchayat	:	Village Assembly (of the five elected).
Pather dhabi	:	One who claims to have found the (right) road.
Qaum	:	Community – can also mean a people, nation, tribe, race, etc.
Ram Navami	:	The ninth day of the bright half of Chaitra on which Lord Rama was born.
Rishi	:	sage.
Sadhana	:	Practice.
Sadhu	:	A religious or holy man, a hermit, a mendicant.
Sahid	:	martyr.
Samiti	:	Society.
Sandhya	:	dusk.
Sanjibani	:	That which gives (back) life.
Sannyasa, sannyasin	:	The stage of renunciation; One who renounces. Also see *Brahmacharin*.
Satyagraha	:	Insistence on or fury for *(Agraha)* the truth *(Satya)*.
Shakti	:	Literally Energy – also Goddess of strengh and energy.
Singhavalokan	:	A retrospect – (literally the backward glance of a lion.)
Swadeshi	:	One's own *(Swa)* Country's *(Deshi)*.

Swadesh Bhandhab	:	Friend (relative) of one's own country.
Suhrid	:	good-hearted.
Suprabhat	:	Good Morning.
Tapas	:	meditation.
Tappal	:	Post.
Utsava	:	merry-making, gala, festival.
Vande (Bande) Mataram	:	Obeisance to the Mother.
Vartaman	:	Current, present (prevailing).
Vasishta	:	A celebrated Vedic sage – the Kulaguru (family or tribal priest) of Raghu-vamsa (the line of Raghu in which Lord Rama was born).
Vihari	:	One who roams for pleasure, an epithet of Lord Krishna.

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